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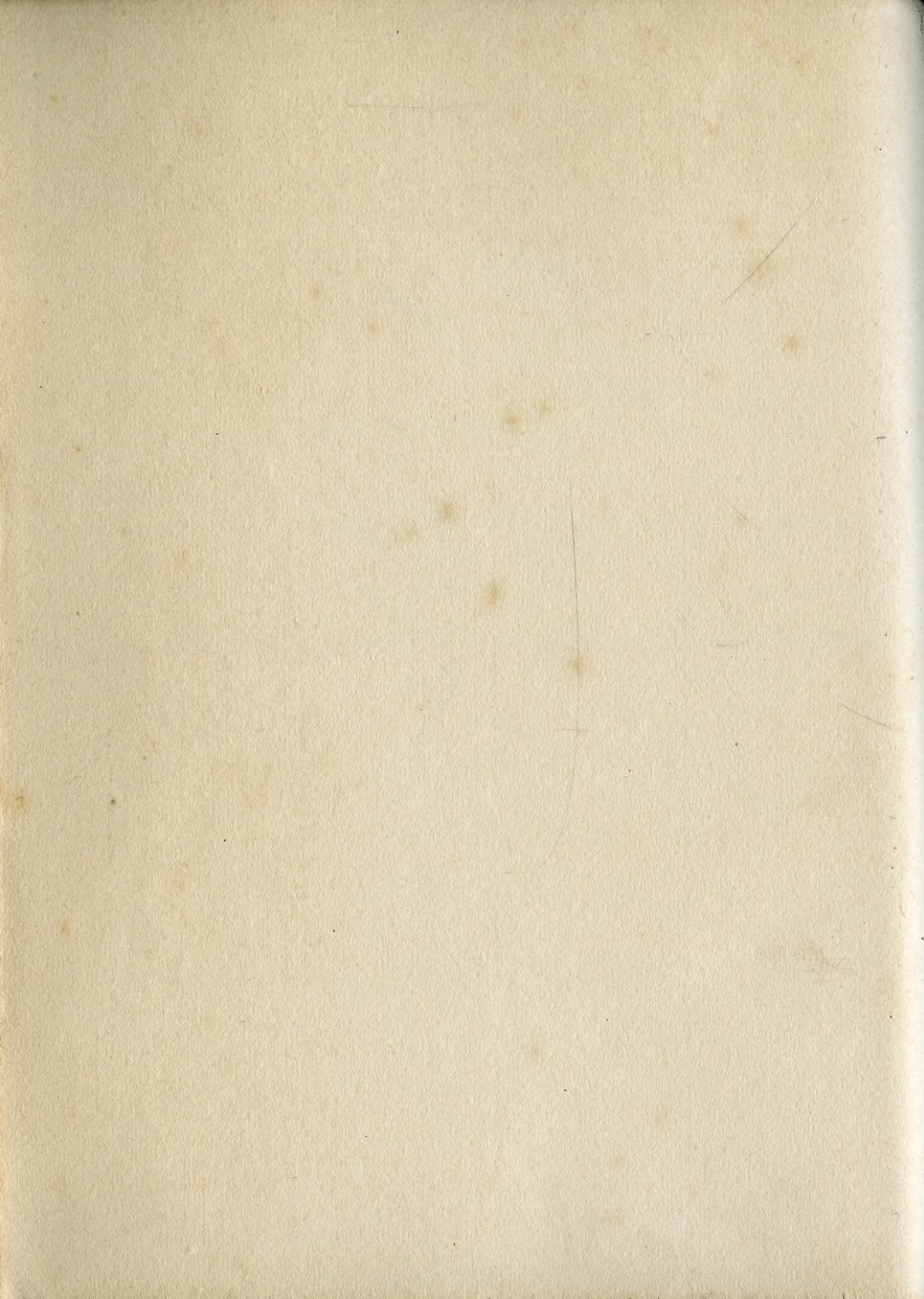


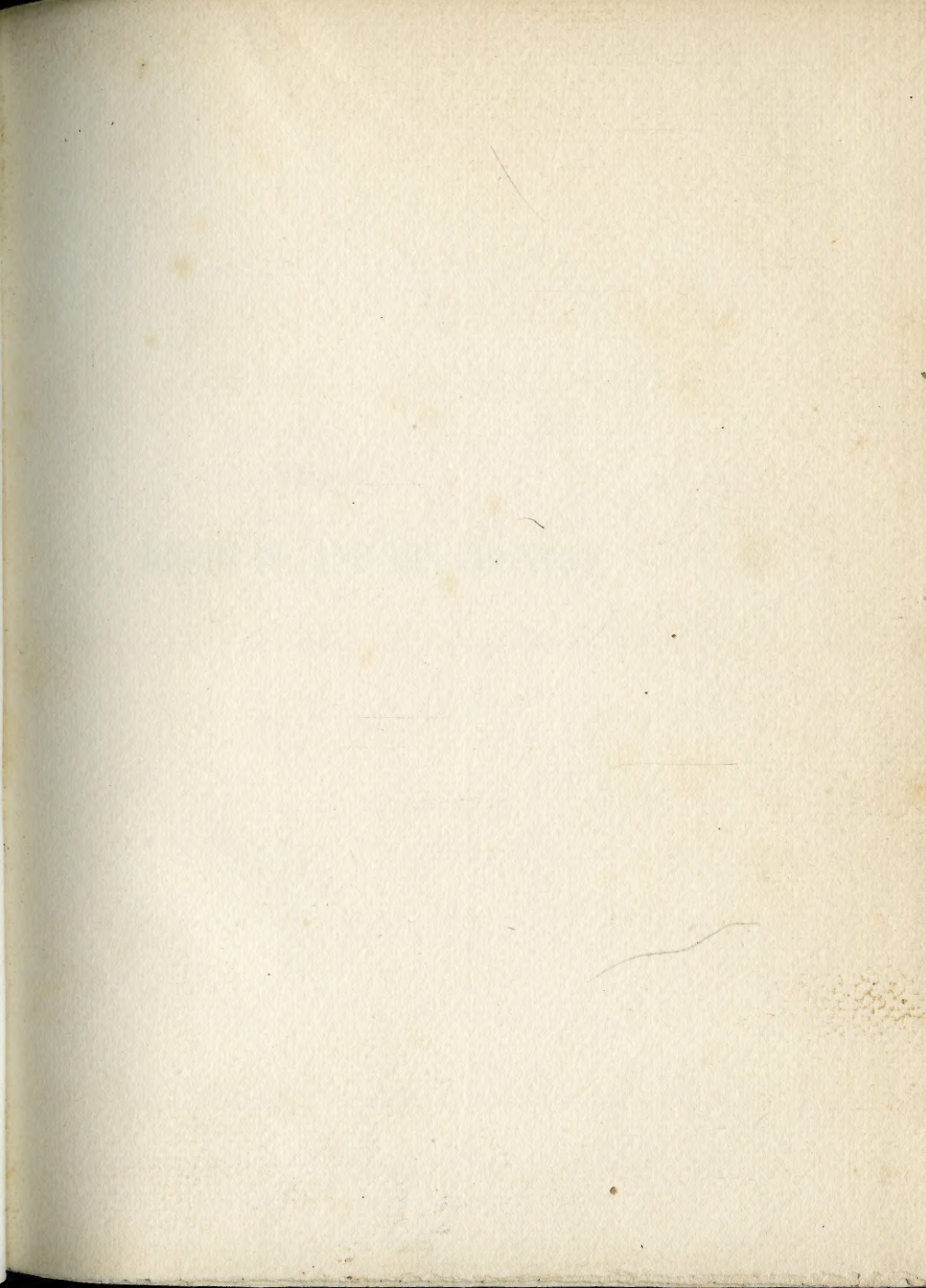
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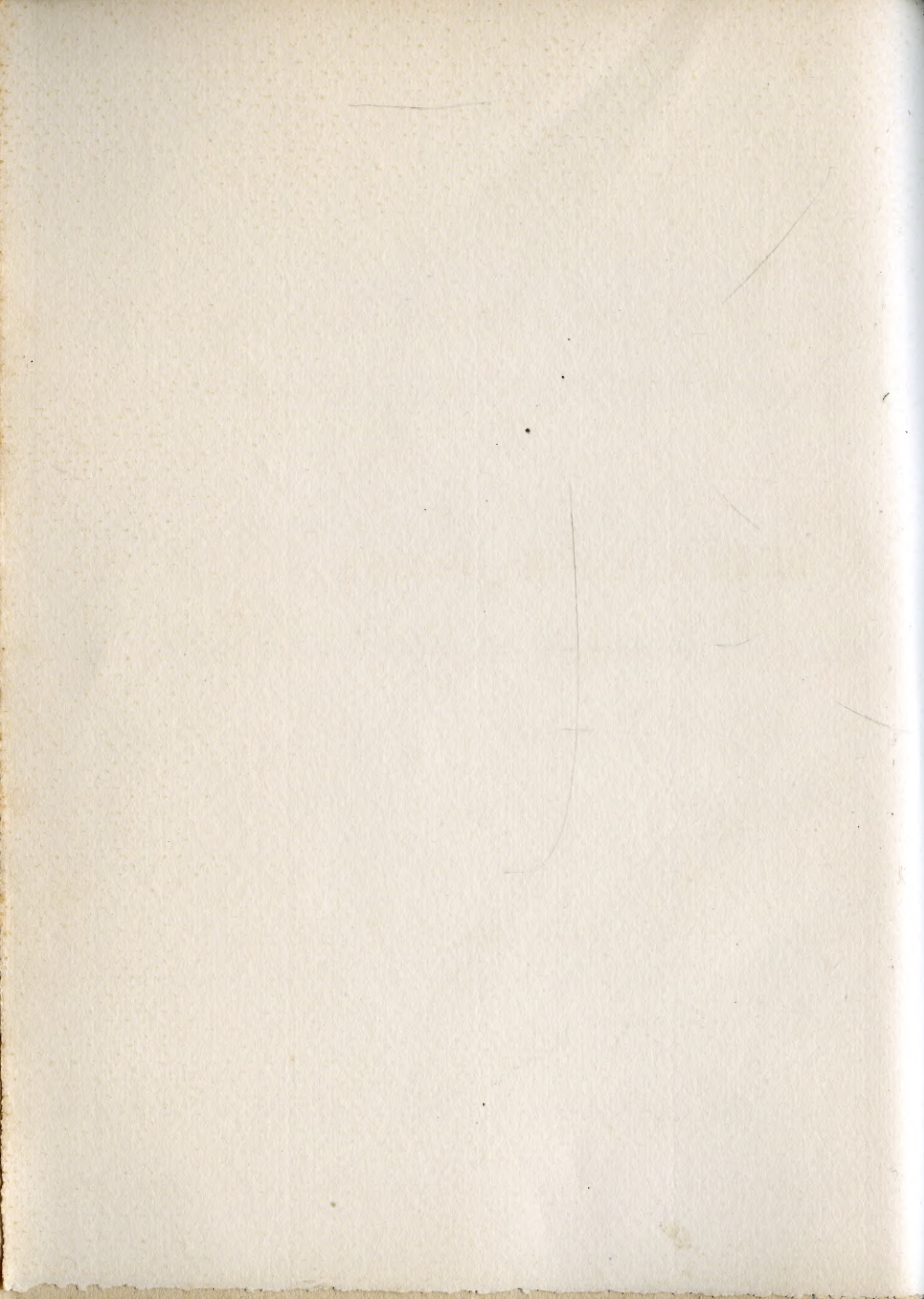
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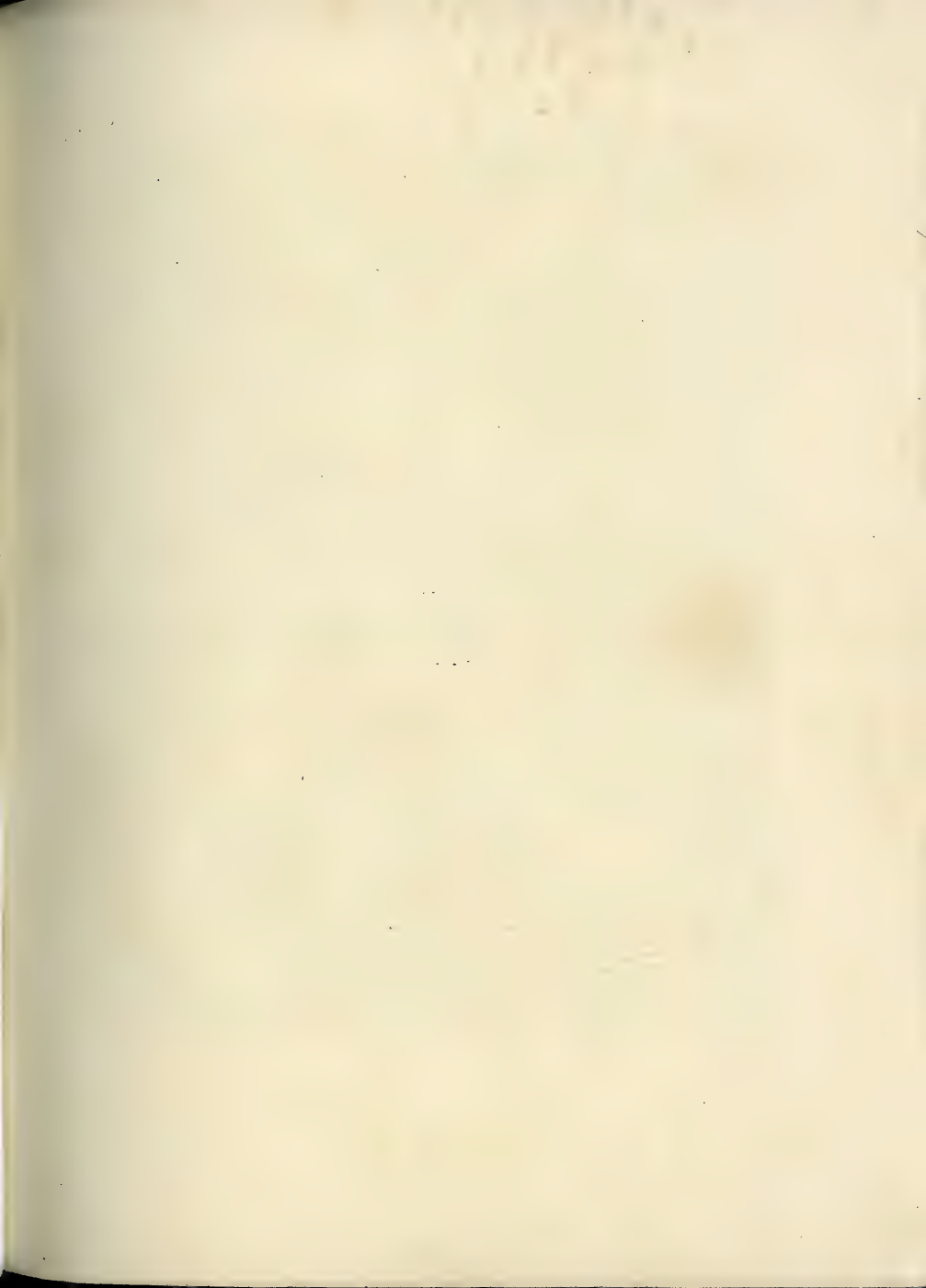


HENRI IV. AND HIS COUNTRY

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N^o 60

S. Beach [initials].





HENRI IV

PORTRAIT IN CHATEAU DE LACQ

HENRI IV. AND HIS COUNTRY

FOXHUNTING AT THE FOOT OF THE PYRENEES

SUN-BASKING ON THE BASQUE COAST

BY

S. BEACH CHESTER

(CHESTER OF WETHERSFIELD AND BLABY),
OFFICER OF THE GREEK ORDER OF THE REDEEMER, -
AUTHOR OF "LIFE OF VENIZELOS", ETC.

ILLUSTRATED



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ÉDOUARD PRIVAT



TO NICHOLAS EUMORFOPOULOS.



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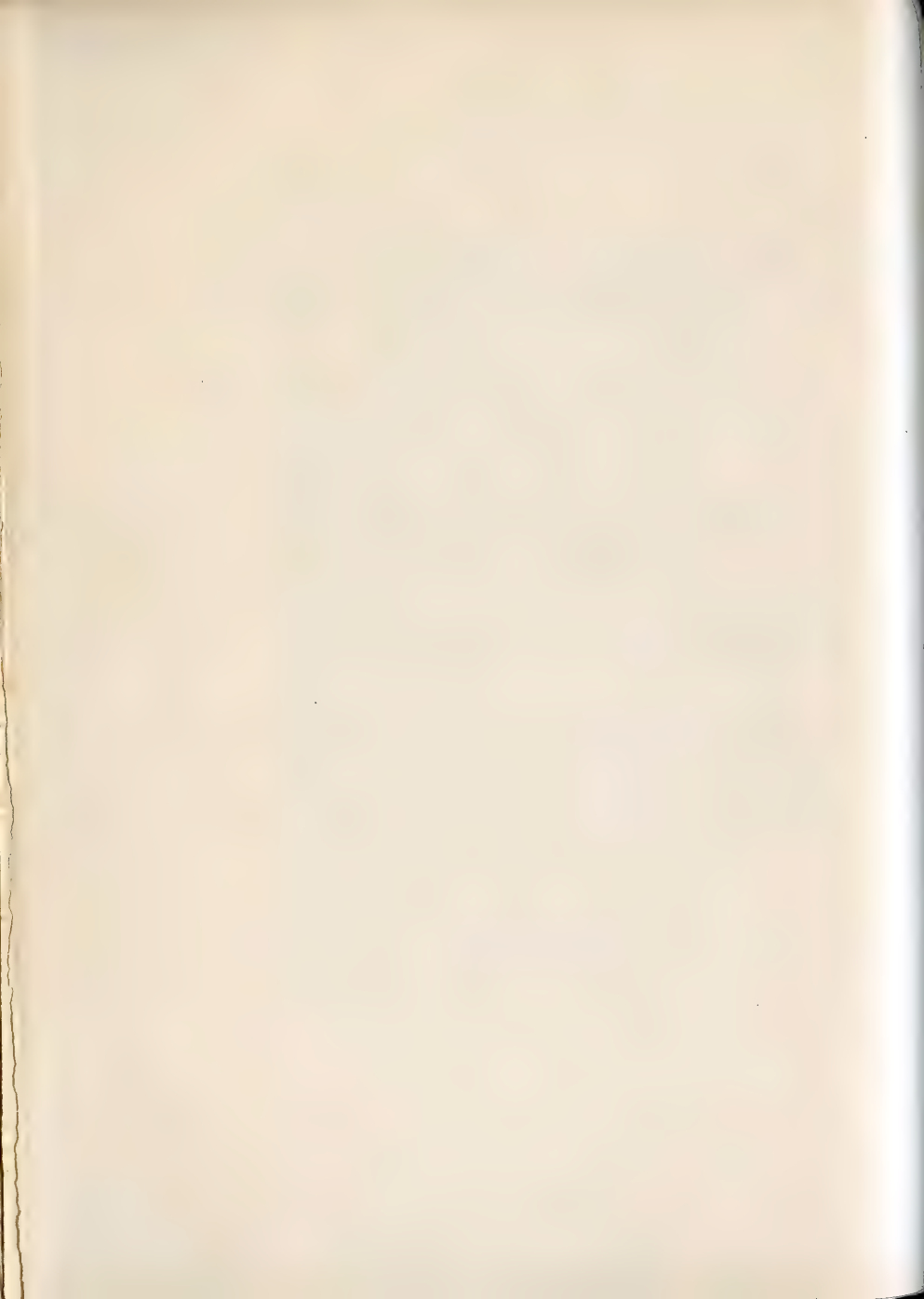
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PREFACE

Henri IV. as a lover, the Prince of Wales as a baccarat player, Louis XIV. as a bridegroom and Biarritz as the first *plage* in France provide this book with a variety of subjects. Henry Russell on the Pyrenees, Mrs. Bloodgood in the saddle and Sir Alexander Taylor in the reign of Louis Philippe add variety also to the literary style. The book, however, must speak for itself. In the arrangement of chapters, it may seem to speak rather casually. The Basque Coast is not the country of Henri IV., but its importance entitles it to a

certain precedence. That is why it is sandwiched in between Henri's love affairs and the chapters on historic Béarn.

My cordial thanks for most valuable assistance are due to Dr. Georges Sabatier, of the Académie de Béarn, and to M. Joseph de Zangroniz, of the Ecole des Chartes, Archivist and Librarian of Pau. I am also indebted to M. Lemaître, Curator of Pau Castle, who has been very helpful to me.

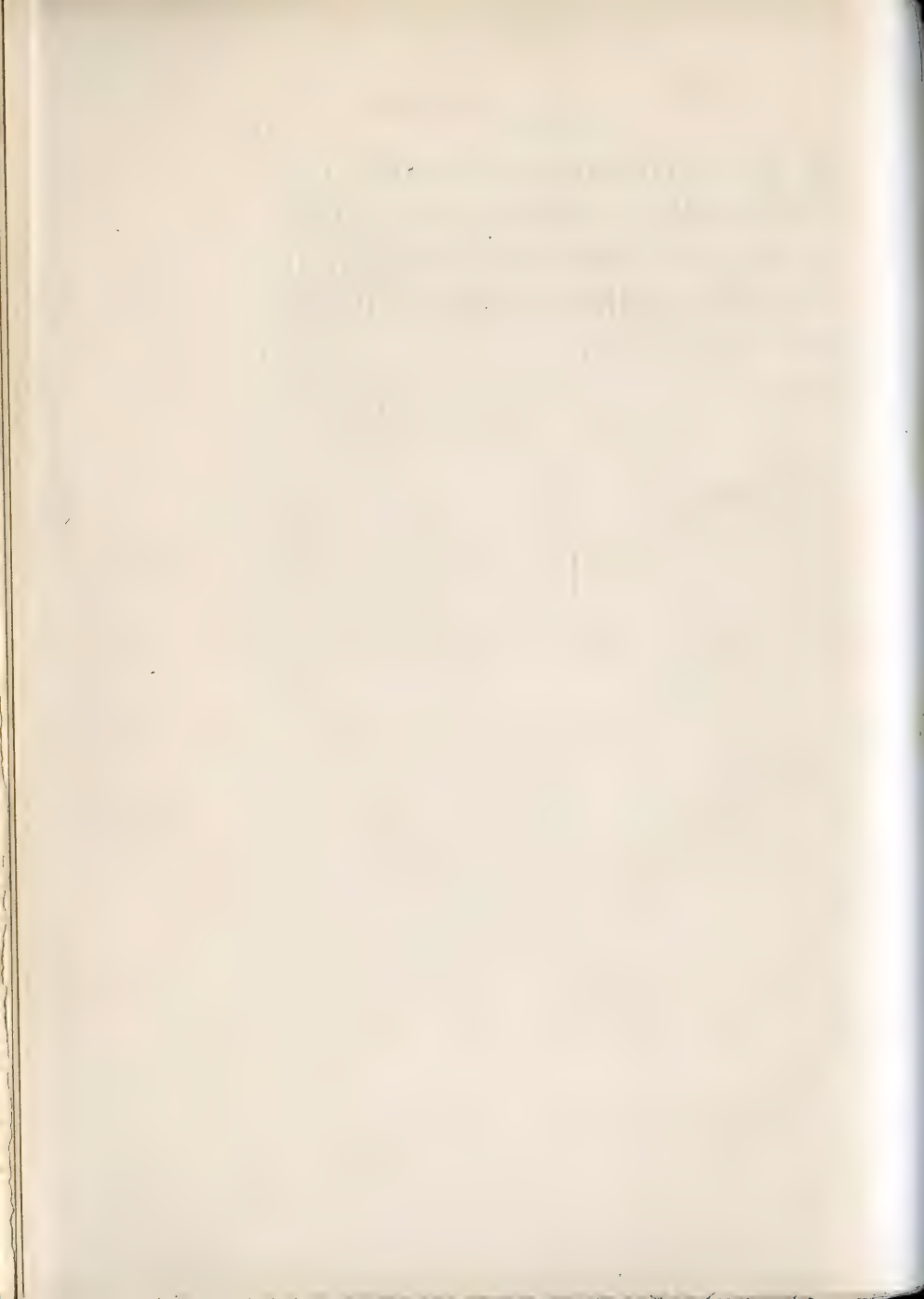
Mrs. John Bloodgood, Mr. Henry S. Adams, Editor of *The Spur*, and Mr. Van Tassal Sutphen have placed me under great obligations, the first for a literary contribution, the second for permission to use it, and the third for some excellent advice.

On the commercial side, I have been

aided in an important degree by Mr. E. V. L. Carter, Mr. A. Hewetson, and M. Georges Dubert. The success of *Henri IV. and His Country* has been assured through their ceaseless activities.

S. BEACH CHESTER.

Majestic, Biarritz.



CHAPTER I

The Women of Henri IV.

There is one name which dominates everything in Pau. It is the name of Henri IV. The official name for the castle of Pau is the Château Henri IV. There is the chocolate of Henri IV., the wine of Henri IV., the inn of Henri IV., and the street of Henri IV. There used to be a club of Henri IV. The town itself is chiefly known as the birthplace of Henri IV.

But there are few reminders of his women. And yet they were the most characteristic element in his life and career. Whether dancers, dairymaids or duchesses, they were the very essence of his existence as a man and a king.

Inquiring minds have fixed the number of his love entanglements at fifty-six. Unlike Henry VIII. of England, Henri IV. had only

two wives and probably regretted both marriages bitterly. Married women might consider him a very bad husband. But, in reality, he was a pleasant, good-hearted, courageous and rather admirable monarch, handicapped by the most objectionable mother-in-law of the time. After duping him into the marriage with her daughter, Margaret, Catherine de Medici next poisoned his young heart with the love virus of her accomplished group of expert professional beauties, all specially trained to the work of Machiavellism as applied to sex. She had absorbed the teachings of the great Florentine, who had so faithfully served her House, and utilised them to perfection, through chosen instruments, in her dealings with illustrious men. Beauty and attraction were converted into a powerful weapon of the State. The young women who secretly served the Queen Mother were lovely enough and sufficiently unscrupulous to carry through more treaties than the regular diplomatists and to make more conquests than the best generals. Henri was young and no doubt *gauche* — he

probably had a provincial manner — when he arrived at the Court of France for his first marriage. It proved to be an extremely dangerous *milieu* for the King of Navarre as he then was.

His early years had been designed to give him health and strength rather than the qualities of a courtier. At birth, his grandfather of Navarre had given him some drops of wine to make his temperament virile and vigourous. And the same grandfather had directed that he should be brought up roughly and accustomed to inferior clothes in order to strengthen the boy's fibre. Henri was difficult to raise and after he had passed through the hands of seven or eight nurses in quick succession, he was placed in the care of Suzanne de Bourbon, wife of Jean d'Albret, Baron de Miossens, and relegated to the Château of Coarraze, beyond Nay, about 12 miles from Pau. In the words of Alexander Taylor, « he was left to the unsophisticated workings of a mind naturally good, and mixing with his future subjects in all their pastimes, and leading a hardy life,

in no respect different from the peasantry, he acquired those moral and physical qualities, which afterwards shone forth in the just and sagacious monarch. »

In 1572, Henri, as chief of the Huguenots, who were too strong to be beaten in the field, was invited to marry Margaret of Valois, sister of Charles IX. Margaret had already had some discreditable love affairs, but, to make things easier for the Protestants, Henri agreed to marry her. Jeanne d'Albret, his mother, a rigid Protestant, went through some anxious moments at Pau, when she heard the news. She begged him to bring his bride to Béarn as soon after the marriage as possible. The French Court seemed to her to epitomise all the vices of which mankind is capable. It was certainly rather a hotbed of iniquity entirely foreign to the King of Navarre's upbringing.

His marriage took place on August 18th. St. Bartholomew's Massacre occurred on August 23rd. A preliminary fatality had been the death of Jeanne d'Albret in June. She had journeyed to Paris in connection with the

wedding, but lost her life through wearing poisoned gloves which had been prepared by a Florentine perfumer. Catherine de Medici can safely be held responsible for her death. She was also privy to the massacre, in which the Duke of Guise was involved. « *Ainsi le présent nuptial du Prince fut la mort de sa mère; la fête, le massacre général de ses amis.* » It was a bad beginning for Henri's married life. No other ill befell him, however, though he was kept — almost a prisoner — in the palace, while his friends and followers were being killed outside. As he was not much drawn to his wife, he speedily came under the influence of one of Catherine's female agents. It may be said that he was young — under twenty — and foolish. Long after he had ceased to be young, he was still just as foolish where women were concerned.

It must be admitted that Henri quickly became *blasé vis-à-vis* Catherine's beautiful sirens. She once came with a bevy of these creatures to the Château of St. Brix, near Cognac, to coax him into some fresh political

pitfall, but he astounded her with his unexpected *sang froid*. At the close of the interview, Catherine, who ruled though she did not reign, felt very dissatisfied with the way matters were going. « What do you want, Monsieur? » she asked Henri. He eyed the various *intrigantes*, whom she had brought to captivate him, and shook his head. « There is nothing here which pleases me, Madame! » he replied bluntly.

Henri's marriage was a failure from every point of view except one : it prevented him from making a *mésalliance* as long as it lasted. His first love affair, soon after the marriage, was with Madame de Sauves, who had received directions from his mother-in-law to enslave him. Catherine intended that the temptress she had chosen should at once estrange him from his wife — her own daughter — and then embroil him with her third surviving son, the Duc d'Alençon.

Madame de Sauves easily accomplished the mission with great efficiency. While Marguerite was furious that such a woman should

steal her husband, the Duc d'Alençon fell into a frenzy because he regarded Madame de Sauves as his alone by every natural right. Henri had hurried into the trap hypnotised — entranced — by the beauty of the lady. She later became Marquise de Noirmoutier.

Nineteen more or less well established love episodes followed the affair with Madame de Sauves and then Henri met Diane d'Andoins, Countess of Gramont and Guiche, commonly known as *La Belle Corisande*¹. The meeting took place in 1582. Diane, who was his 21st inamorata, left a clearer impression on his destiny than any of her predecessors. Among other things, she probably loved him for himself. She was the widow of Philibert de Gramont, Count of Guiche, Viscount Aster, Mayor of Bordeaux, Governor of Bayonne, and Seneschal of Béarn.

When Henri was fighting in the eighth little war of religion — it was called the war of the

1. Andoins, from which Diane took her name, is an occasional *rendez-vous de chasse* — of the Pau Hunt — today.

three Henris (of France, of Navarre and of Guise) — Diane devoted her fortune, as well as her affections, to his support. In return, he promised to marry her if the chance arose. It was one of his peculiarities to discuss marriage with the ladies of his fancy. After winning a victory at Coutras — October 20, 1587 — he hastened to his mistress from the field of battle with the flags which he had seized. In this way, he greatly disappointed his troops who were eager to press on to fresh triumphs. This was not the only occasion when love took precedence of war in his actions. But by this time he was Heir Presumptive — through the death of the Duc d'Alençon in 1584 — to the Throne of France, and everything he did was of new and special importance to the whole country.

He was given to writing Diane beautiful and highly poetic letters, possibly because he was not really very deeply moved by passion where she was concerned. She was a well-born and — it is almost admissible to say — a well-behaved woman, certainly well-behaved in

comparison with many of his other mistresses. Still, she was a woman, and, in the end, showed keen resentment towards him for abandoning, instead of marrying, her. Sully, Henri's gifted and usually honourable Minister, had to adopt various expedients to extract from the lady his master's written promise of marriage.

The last we hear of Diane is that she is « *fort grasse, grosse et rouge de visage.* » During the last days of her sway over Henri, he won the Battle of Arques for the Huguenots, beating Mayenne, at the head of 30,000 Ligueurs. At the Battle of Ivry in the following year — 1590 — he reminded his men that when they could no longer see their banners and standards to look for his white panache, and to rally round him, for there honour and glory would await them. His brave words and brave conduct were rewarded, for he won the battle after being exposed to every danger.

As Henri III. had been assassinated in 1589, Henri de Navarre had already succeeded in name to the French Throne.

Diane watched events from afar and thought bitterly of her faithless lover. He had six known *affaires de cœur* between the advent of Diane and her disappearance from his life. The next important woman — and the most notorious of all — was Gabrielle d'Estrées. Although history is inclined to treat her kindly, she was not on the same moral plane as Madame de Guiche. She had carried on an intrigue with the Duc de Bellegarde, who introduced her to Henri with the object of her acquiring an ascendancy over the King's susceptible heart. Indeed, Henri behaved exactly as one might suppose. He was soon writing letters to Gabrielle in which he « kissed her a million times. » This ought to have been very gratifying to Bellegarde, but, in practice, it was not, for, contrary to his own calculations, he was becoming jealous.

The Duc de Longueville was another lover, who felt that he had rights at least as good as Bellegarde's. As the King had been quick to annex Gabrielle, they came to the wise conclusion that they could no longer dispute poss-

ession of the lady between themselves. Bellegarde, nevertheless, managed to carry on a very secret liaison with her for some time afterwards; even after the King had announced that a woman's love was the one thing on earth he would not share with anyone else. Indeed, Henri became so obsessed about his new mistress that he declared he would rather lose a dozen crowns than lose her. On one occasion, he actually put his life in danger, passing through an enemy country, disguised as a peasant, to expostulate with her for leaving him. She received him disdainfully and ridiculed his strange get-up. But no words and no looks on her part were capable of reducing his ardour. « He carried in his heart the fire which she had lighted and he could think of no one else. » That is the way one authority describes his state of mind. Gabrielle herself still placed Bellegarde above everyone in her affections. There is no reason to believe that he was her first lover — there may have been a dozen or more before him — but he was the one who counted most. In the language of

Lescure, « she oscillated between Bellegarde and Longueville, » always, however, preferring the former. Once Bellegarde jumped out of a window as Henri IV. burst open the door. It was a narrow escape; finding nothing suspicious, the King was lulled.

Gabrielle d'Estrées was the daughter of the Marquis de Cœuvres by Françoise de la Bourdaisière. Madame de Cœuvres was what we should consider a terrible woman, who sometimes boasted of love affairs she had had with Pope Clement VII., the Emperor Charles V. and King François I^{er}. She perhaps felt impelled to talk of these triumphs in the days when she was forced to confine her activities to obscure ones. She was a thoroughly unprincipled mother and her half-dozen daughters, of whom the most beautiful was Gabrielle, were early led astray.

Gabrielle herself was more sinned against than sinning and some historians speak of her with marked favour. Personally, I have greater sympathy with her predecessor, Diane de Guiche. The latter was extraordinarily

virtuous; Henri may well have been her first and only lover.

As Gabrielle's power increased, Longueville utilised her influence for his own advancement at Court. He took advantage of her in every way, notably fooling her abominably in connection with the return of some old love letters. They had agreed to exchange their collections of these missives, but while Gabrielle handed over all Longueville's, he kept back the most compromising of hers.

Longueville was shot dead during a salute fired in his honour by the garrison of Dourlens and there were certain little suspicions at the time. In *Les Amours de Henri IV.*, printed in Cologne in 1695 — about a century after the event — there are the following lines : « *Quelques-uns dirent que cestoit un effet de la vangeance de Mademoiselle d'Etrées, & passeront même jusqu'à avancer qu'elle avoit fait faire le coup, & à dire vrai il y avoit bien de l'apparence.* »

Les Amours de Henri IV. was published anonymously, but the authorship is attributed to the Princesse de Conti. In the quotation,

I have left the 17th century spelling. If Gabrielle really did inspire Longueville's death, there is something to be said in her defence, for she helped and protected him until he became treacherous without cause.

Before long Henri IV. was repeating his old practice of promising marriage to a mistress. Gabrielle was honoured in this way like Mme. de Guiche. Fortunately Queen Margaret was still alive, busy amusing herself with a string of lovers.

The Queen's mode of life was decidedly scandalous. She could no longer afford to have her sleeping apartment lighted by a thousand candles nor her bed made up with black taffeta sheets. But she moved about the country, far from the Court, driven from place to place by creditors and other trouble-makers. It may have been a good thing for France that she failed to die under the strain.

It had so little bearing on the royal love-making that it is scarcely worth mentioning, but Gabrielle had been provided with a dummy husband — and a divorce. It gave

a better impression at Court for her to have been married, even nominally. She was able to become known as Madame Gabrielle; it sounded better than Mademoiselle, in all the circumstances. The husband who had disappeared into oblivion was the Seigneur de Liancourt : he was ugly, repulsive-looking, but of an excellent landowning family, armigerous for generations. There is no need to refer to the marriage again. Gabrielle herself tried to forget it at the church door. Her mind was full of a marriage of a very different sort. She was looking forward to the day when she might reasonably expect to become Queen of France. Henri had so often referred to the question that she can hardly be blamed. He was full of the sincerity of the moment, and believed what he said himself, but his promises sprang from habit essentially. It must be remembered also that she was, by all accounts, amazingly pretty. « *Gabrielle avoit la plus belle tête du monde,* » declared Dreux du Radier, in a frenzy of enthusiasm. « *Des cheveux blonds et*

en quantité; les yeux bleus, d'un brillant à éblouir et qui égaloit leur éclat : un teint de la composition des Grâces, où les lys l'emportoient sur les roses, quand il n'étoit point animé par quelque sentiment vif; le nez bien fait; une bouche où l'enjouement et l'amour se reposoient, et parfaitement bien garnie; le tour du visage, que les peintres prennent pour modèle; l'oreille petite, vive et bien bordée; sa gorge, d'une beauté à faire oublier toutes les autres; la taille, les bras, la main, le pied, tout répondoit à la tête, formoit un ensemble qu'on n'admiroit point impunément. »

This portrait in words seems to have been accurate enough, though it is more pleasing than those on canvas which I have chanced to see.

In 1593, for reasons of State, Henri, on the advice of Sully, Crillon and Madame Gabrielle, abandoned Protestantism. Paris, as a result, threw open its gates and welcomed him as King. The remaining strongholds of Catholicism in Brittany, Picardy and Lorraine were also won over, though some years later. He had succeeded to the Throne in 1589, but had

not enjoyed his full rights owing to the militant attitude of the Catholics. Paris, which he had besieged in 1590, had been his chief stumbling-block after his victories at Arques and Ivry.

In 1595, Gabrielle was created Marquise de Monceaux, a property not far from Meaux. And in the following year the King bestowed upon her the title of Duchesse de Beaufort.

Already the question of a royal divorce had been raised. In 1593, Duplessis-Mornay had discussed with the King the dangers of repeated intrigues. In Lescure's book, Henri is made to reply, « *Pourquoi ne song-t-on pas à me marier?* » When the Queen was approached, she pretended to agree to a divorce, but various delays followed and the relations of the couple remained unchanged. Some people thought that Henri shrank from the consequences of freedom and others that Margaret had suddenly grown jealous or aimed at a high indemnity. Whatever the cause may have been, the effect was to prolong the divorce negotiations for years.

It cannot be said that Henri and Gabrielle were often troubled with thorns in their bed of roses, but from time to time some little occurrence almost brought them into conflict. Once, in a scene between the pair about the excellent Sully, who was present, Gabrielle called the Minister a valet. She was furious that Henri could see any good in him. Sully himself was incensed by her insolence. The King also grew very angry. « I could more easily find ten mistresses like you, » he cried, fixing Gabrielle with a fierce glance, « than another servant of the Crown equal to him ! »

Possibly this incident was the beginning of the end. Gabrielle had nearly exhausted her influence over Henri and, as a matter of course, he was becoming sharp and critical in his conduct towards her. It was natural enough, in a man of his life and temperament, though it may not have been very praiseworthy.

Gabrielle died on April 10, 1599. Whether she died in child-birth, or from poison administered in the hostelry of one Zamet, can only

be conjectured. The exact cause of her death remains a mystery.

Henri's divorce from Marguerite de Valois became an accomplished fact on November 10, 1599.

April 25, 1600, was the date of his contract of marriage with Marie de Medici.

It is curious to note, as a matter of psychology, that, in the interval between Gabrielle's death and the divorce from Margaret, the King once more reverted to his time-honoured custom of proposing marriage to yet another mistress.

It was on October 1, 1599, that he committed himself on paper to Henriette de Balzac-d'Entragues, who was destined to play an important part before and behind the scenes in the remaining years of his life. He ultimately bought back the letter for 20,000 gold *écus*, plus a marshal's *bâton* for the disappointed beauty's outraged father.

But to follow the actual sequence of events, it is necessary to begin the story with a carefully arranged little hunting party at the

Château of Malesherbes, the property of the Marquis d'Entragues. Henriette, the elder of the two daughters of the house, was considered well qualified to interest Henri IV. In addition to her great beauty, she was both charming and clever. What was no less important, she possessed a designing mother and a father whose conscience seemed far from over-sensitive. He had obligingly married his wife, indeed, at the instigation of Charles IX., who was angry with the lady. She had previously become the mother of the Comte d'Auvergne, named Charles, after the King. The union of the Marquis and the Marquise d'Entragues was a prosaic affair. The husband — he was Governor of Orleans — would be of no interest whatever if it had not been for the hunting party. The real quarry was not a stag or a boar, but His Majesty the King of France.

Henri, on his side, had been hunting for a fresh beauty and was perfectly satisfied to fall into the clutches of the adorable young woman of whom he had heard so much.



HENRI IV in Bedroom Scene

GOBELINS TAPESTRY IN PAU CASTLE

Madame d'Entragues had superintended all the details, and the Marquis had been very affable and encouraging. One incident in the plot fitted into another like a mosaic. There was rejoicing at Malesherbes. Later, the King and the Entragues went to Paris, where Henriette played the little comedy of resistance so well that Henri, who was never prodigal with his money, except in gambling bouts, suddenly sent her 100,000 *écus*. With the most ingenuous air imaginable, Mlle. d'Entragues accepted the money, but informed Henri that her parents were becoming very troublesome, spying on her all the time to prevent her from yielding to her inclination. Of course, she admitted that she loved him and even that the severity of the parental surveillance was breaking her heart. He was maddened almost beyond endurance. Henriette wept sympathetically. What could be done to escape the inexorable destiny which kept her from his embraces? Henri, so brave on the battlefield, had lost his head like a school-boy. Then his lovely companion provided

him with a ray of hope. « Ah, Sire, » she sighed, « if you will place in writing that you will marry me in a year, my parents might be less terrifying! » The King, ready to sign anything at that moment, even his abdication, was overwhelmed. The innocent little creature from the Château de Malesherbes saw that she had gained her point. « For myself, » she added, « I will work hard to overcome the anger of my father and mother. With your promise, I may — who knows? — succeed. » They parted tumultuously. That is to say, Henriette played her part very well. The King returned to Fontainebleau, wrote out a promise of marriage and showed the document to Sully.

« What is your opinion of this? » he asked.

Sully, who was hard-headed if he was not hard-hearted, seized the paper and tore it in two.

Henri looked at him in astonishment.

« I think you must be mad! » he cried.

His Minister gazed at him ironically.

« I should like to be the only one in that condition, Sire! »

Without another word, the King turned and left him. If the victor of Arques and Ivry was to be thwarted in the path of true love by such obstacles as unintelligent parents and a wooden-headed statesman the world must have reached a melancholy pass. Henri seated himself and immediately framed, in his own hand, a second promise to marry the beautiful Henriette. He did not send it to her at once, however. His advisers were imploring him to consider the interests of the State before entering into a *mésalliance*. They proposed that he should marry Marie de Medici, niece of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and, to quiet them, he authorised Sil-lery to go to Italy and make the necessary arrangements.

The Entragues were still occupied in keeping Henriette out of his way in order to inflame him to the last degrees of folly. They went from one place to another and he was always at their heels. Efforts were

made by his friends to divert his attention to other women. The feminine influences to which he was subjected never held him for more than twenty-four hours at a time. For him every emotion was ephemeral except the memory of Henriette d'Entragues. Some time after she had received the promise of marriage, she decided that the comedy of keeping him off had better end, unless she wished to lose him altogether. She knew she had many rivals, who were favoured by those who desired to prevent a serious royal entanglement. Consequently at the psychological moment she flung herself into his arms.

While Gabrielle d'Estrées was a milder and less mercenary woman than Henriette, the latter was in some ways equally or even more attractive and possessed a quick wit which served to pass the King's time amusingly when he was not otherwise occupied. An almost mathematical calculation had been at work in her brain from the moment Henri had manifested his approval of her charms. The ready acceptance of the 100,000 *écus*, followed

by the little game of hide-and-seek — in which she was wonderfully elusive — the marriage demand, and the minor machinations directed towards a firmly established and profitable intrigue compel one to agree with Sully, who described Henriette as a « *rusée femelle* ». Her attractions must have provided an ample compensation for her scheming and manœuvring, for it is unbelievable that Henri could for long be deceived by such obvious tactics. He was nearly fifty and by no means a fool and if he behaved in an impulsive way in his pursuit of Henriette it was because it suited his tastes to possess her. If the accomplishment of his aim cost him more in dignity and in cash than she was worth one can only conclude that an obsession had blinded him temporarily to feminine values. Sully, well aware of his natural passion for money, had tried him severely by having the 100,000 *écus* brought in bags and counted in his presence. But even this shock to his nerves was inadequate to turn him from his determination.

It is significant that when his feelings as a

man had been appeased, he coolly lent his ear as a king to the proposal that Marie de Medici would make an excellent consort. Marie had a dowry which he needed to wage a small war against the Duke of Savoy. He himself fixed the dowry at a million-and-a-half *écus*. But, as the war was a pressing necessity, he agreed to take scarcely more than a third of that amount.

When Henriette saw that events had conspired against her becoming a queen, she bowed to the inevitable, and pretended to efface herself. She was a marquise in her own right — the King had created her Marquise de Verneuil — and, though husbandless, there had been talk of finding her a lawful mate among the princes of the blood. And above all she knew that Henri would return to her embraces. She could afford to smile confidently on this point. Marie, though Henri's wife, could never aspire to rival her as a female. The attraction of the Italian was financial and political, and without the all-powerful addition of personal charm. Thus

Henriette was able to make the best of things. Not exactly the best of a bad bargain, for she held a position that no woman of the time could have failed to envy. She had indeed done well for herself according to the ethics of the Court.

She knew very well she could sway Henri's feelings by which he was so often — almost always — guided. His weakness was in some respects his best, if also his most dangerous, quality. It thrust him on a level with humanity. Frequently, as we have seen, he placed kingship and all it entailed far behind the love obsession which happened to be dominating him. He relegated policy to his advisers without troubling to see that they had the power to enforce it. Half the time, the primary meaning of kingship to him was that its glamour created a spell which no woman could resist.

He rather childishly accepted unnecessary difficulties in the process of obtaining possession of Henriette d'Entragues, who from the first was only too eager to become his mistress.

Through the same naïve spirit he permitted Gabrielle d'Estrées to play fast-and-loose with him, to take liberties which he could have checked and generally to make havoc of a favourable situation in the early days of their liaison. She had been the woman of other men before she captivated the King and she appeared to appreciate so little the great change in her fortune that there were moments when she risked being cast into the gutter. Henriette, her principal successor, who was infinitely more intelligent, grasped from the outset that her own interests would best be served by concentrating on Henri and not dividing her mind or herself. She may lose sympathy through being such a calculating woman, but her beauty was her only asset and she prized it highly. Her material advancement depended on it absolutely. If she had thrown herself away on the worthless adventurers who hovered about the Court she would have failed in every aim. Whether or not she ever imagined that the King would fulfil his promise of marriage is of little importance. The fact that he

made it gave her a tangible hold which was worth something. The value was speculative, no doubt. In the result it turned out to be worth exactly 20,000 *écus*. But it also elevated her in the esteem of many women of equal or better birth who had not been lucky enough to have a good excuse for compromising their virtue. It is necessary to explain that the marriage promised was conditional on her becoming the mother of a male child within a specified period. The condition was not fulfilled because her dwelling was struck by lightning and the child was still-born. This curious fact is alluded to as providential by many old writers, including the Princesse de Conti. When Henriette had other children, the marriage question had long since disappeared.

Lescure, with whom one can sympathise without agreeing, labels Henriette as « *la méchante maîtresse* ». Gabrielle he calls « great ». He declares that the latter is nearer being an angel than the former is far from being a devil. Comment of this sort is cheap. Both women were well-bred adventuresses. What Gabrielle

won by her gentler disposition she lost in her traffic with Bellegarde. If Henriette placed a price on herself and insisted on being paid, basing all her actions on this policy, she at any rate appears to have fulfilled her side of the bargain faithfully. There were no lovers in the background to laugh at the King. Certainly not in the early days. It is like making a choice between two evils to consider these women at all. But to call one a saint and the other a sinner is, in the circumstances, ridiculous. The harassed and tormented Sully, always engaged in trying to save his master from the consequences of his escapades, probably hated the whole sex. He had little to choose between Gabrielle and the other siren. It seems to me that, in strict justice, we must go back to the Comtesse de Guiche, forgetting that she had lost her beauty and had become fat and red-faced, and hold her up as the least objectionable — or the most estimable, just as one chooses to put it — of all Henri's inamoratas. It is true that this disillusioned lady, in a moment of pique, endeavoured to frustrate

the King's will by encouraging his sister, Catherine of Navarre, to marry the Comte de Soissons. This is scarcely more than a minor detail and not a black one. Catherine was shut up in the castle — of Pau, it seems — and her lover was expelled from Béarn. Perhaps Mme. de Guiche's greatest recommendation is that she was not an out-and-out adventuress.

Henriette d'Entragues hated Queen Marie venomously. The latter, who had reached twenty seven years of age at the time of her marriage, was a very white, tall, fleshy woman, with only a fine neck and arms to save her from abject unloveliness. Henri became more attached than ever to his favourite after the arrival of his new wife. The day was not far distant when he insisted that they should all live together under the same roof, at the Louvre. It was not exactly a happy arrangement, for both women were devoured by jealousy. The lawful wife did not always have the best of the *contretemps* which followed in endless succession.

Henri showed as time went on that he could forgive anything, even treachery, in the Marquise de Verneuil. When the Queen and the beauty gave birth to sons within a month of each other it would be hard to say which child was dearer to the father. He infinitely preferred the appearance of the little Verneuil, for the Queen's infant was dark and Italian-looking.

Marie was quick to join forces with anyone who had reason to dislike Henriette and might be made a useful ally. There was the Duchesse de Villars, who had been loved by the King and then cast out. She was a sister of Gabrielle d'Estrées, among other things. This disappointed and angry woman had become the mistress of the Prince de Joinville, who possessed some letters in which Henriette had been decidedly indiscreet. Mme. de Villars obtained possession of these epistles and rushed with them to the King. He was greatly perturbed and sent an equerry to catechize his inamorata. On this occasion Henriette must have been very wonderful in her calm disdain,

for the unfortunate equerry returned to the King with a long face and a report which evidently greatly gladdened his master. Soon afterwards the Duc de Guise helpfully produced a scapegoat, his own secretary, whom he declared to be an expert forger, and this innocent and unfortunate man was thrown into prison for manufacturing the incriminating letters. Henriette was restored to greater favour than ever.

Within two months of each other, the Queen and the mistress again gave birth to children, this time, to girls. The two boys, born a year earlier, in the autumn of 1601, were alive and well. Marie's became Louis XIII. and Henriette's, who was christened Henri de Bourbon, became Bishop of Metz and Duc de Verneuil. The two girls also survived, the Queen's, to become ultimately the consort of Philip IV. of Spain, and the mistress', to marry the Duc d'Epemon.

If Henri had been a Mohammedan he could hardly have treated his women more equally. But the Queen disliked it all intensely. That

is easy to understand. Henriette had fresh grievances and grudges to satisfy at every point, too. There was always the memory of the Joinville letters in her mind.

The estimable and much-tried Sully — after whom a street is named in Pau, by the way — spent his life in trying to keep the peace between the king and his quarrelsome ladies. There is something about Sully which one can but admire. His honesty, his unruffled gravity, and his earnest efforts to act as an opiate on the Queen and as bromide on the beautiful daughter of the Marquis d'Entragues are striking in the extreme. There was something sturdy and manly and healthy about him in this torrid perfumed atmosphere of jealousy and hate. He kept his head and grimly advised his master for the best. Henri trusted and respected and endured him and it was wisdom to do so.

From time to time, Sully, who watched the royal expenditure like a receiver in bankruptcy, reluctantly had to part with large sums to the marquise. He was accustomed to think in

military values. When the sum was particularly large, he would mutter to himself that it meant so many thousand soldiers or cannon the less. Without being told so, it is still easy for us to believe that he was fond of his master. It is also equally easy to believe that Henri was lovable, not because of the number and variety of his women — though this is not entirely without significance — but because of the large-hearted way he forgave his worst enemies. Most great kings and all great statesmen have been conspicuously devoid of the simple but rare human attribute called forgiveness. Henri could forgive in a surprising way. He would throw policy to the winds, take his life in his hands and pardon sinners who deserved the scaffold. The conspiracies in which a host of notables were involved brought this side of his character clearly to light. As his mistress' father and half-brother were both implicated, he may have been softened by Henriette's entreaties, especially as she had also to defend herself.

If one does not forget that the Maréchal de

Biron was beheaded, one remembers that he richly deserved his fate. But, on the whole, Henri appears to have been a lenient, easy-going man ready to forgive anyone possessed of a tongue — rather than a soul — to repent with. Tears were still more useful.

The irritations of the Queen had been momentarily abated by the recovery of the famous letter in which the King promised to marry Henriette. She had been mortified by its notoriety, for anyone had been able to see it for the asking. As Poirson points out, she feared that if the king was assassinated the letter would be used to support the Verneuil children against the legitimate line. It cost the twenty thousand *écus*, and the marshal's bâton for the Marquis d'Entragues, but to Marie all this was as nothing for the letter had seemed like a sword of Damocles hanging over her head. The real trouble remained and that was that Henri could not live without the Marquise de Verneuil. The King, who was as feeble in the restraint of his passions and in the management of his household as he had been brave

and hardy in war, lacked the force to control Marie or sever his association with Henriette.

The years passed without extinguishing the King's passion for his mistress. She, however, showed less cleverness in her manipulation of his desires. He probably greatly bored her with his love letters — sometimes three or four in a day — and there must have been many occasions when his presence was still more irksome. It is safe to believe that the love, such as it was, was all on his side. She was thoroughly tired of him and no longer sufficiently interested to play her part with skill. In the end, Henri grew offended. He complained bitterly over and over again.

Then he suddenly cooled down.

It was the end.

Mme. de Verneuil had passed out of his life.

But Henri's need for love was not extinct. It was smouldering like a volcano, ready to break out and make him the victim of the maddest of all his caprices. One day Henriette Charlotte de Montmorency appeared at Court and all the other beauties were from that mo-

ment eclipsed. By all accounts she was the most lovely Frenchwoman of the 17th century, and as well-born as she was beautiful. The poor King, full of love and yet loveless, was promptly sent into transports. One glance at the charming creature told him that he had met his fate. She was No. 55 in the list and the most formidable of all.

Without an instant's delay, Henri paid a visit to the Duchess of Angoulême, her aunt, with whom she was staying. After this, he decided that a husband must at once be provided for her. Bassompierre soon flashed through his mind as a likely candidate. But, on probing the question, he feared that Mlle. de Montmorency might take a fancy to this bold and irrepressible individual.

What with an attack of gout, a grand passion and a mind full of queer schemes, Henri needed repose. He was lying in his bed, playing at dice with several *seigneurs*, including Bassompierre, when Mme. d'Angoulême arrived one day with her beautiful charge. The King explained his intentions about a husband and

stated that he had chosen for this honour the Prince de Condé, his own nephew. As Bassompierre saw the young woman make a grimace, he believed that he himself would have met with greater favour in her eyes. He was so distracted with chagrin that he excused himself and escaped from the palace.

Although Mlle. de Montmorency married the Prince de Condé almost immediately, he was evidently either tormented by conscience or *amour propre*, for he showed very bad grace in falling in with the King's designs. In spite of his gout and his gambling, Henri's feelings were centred in his latest love affair. When he heard that his nephew was not as grateful as he thought he ought to have been, he stormed about like a madman, and ordered the compensation he had promised him to be stopped.

The Prince de Condé decided to get Henriette Charlotte out of the way. So together, in a coach drawn by six horses, they fled from France.

« What am I to do? » asked the King.

He was addressing himself to Sully, as usual.

« Nothing! » answered the Minister.

« Nothing? » repeated the King. « What do you mean? »

Sully remained unmoved.

« By doing nothing, Sire, » he explained, « you will give the impression to everyone that you regard the Prince de Condé as of no importance. No one abroad will help him and here he will lose his friends. In three months, he will be compelled to return of his own accord. »

« And if I honour the rascal with a vigorous pursuit? »

Sully bowed sadly, but with detachment.

« Why then the Prince will be honoured by all the enemies of the State, both at home and abroad, and given money and protection in order to cause your Majesty displeasure. »

Having listened to this wise counsel, Henri followed the dictates of his own heart, according to his habit, and embarked upon violent measures.

His passion for the Princesse de Condé was



HENRI IV as a Lover

GOBELINS TAPESTRY IN PAU CASTLE

unbounded. In spite of his age, — he was between fifty-five and sixty — he adopted all sorts of strange menial disguises in order to catch glimpses of his enchantress. And when the husband got the lady out of the way and over the frontier, the King was prepared to wage war on those who afforded them a refuge. Brussels became the ultimate destination of the pair, for there Condé could claim some aid from his brother-in-law, the Prince of Orange. The Austrian and Spanish authorities also showed him sympathy.

The Marquis de Pralin, the Marquis de Cœuvres and Henri's other emissaries found that they were powerless and returned to France without either of the fugitives. The Princesse de Condé was sourly admonished in various letters from her father, the Connétable de Montmorency; and her aunt, the Duchesse d'Angoulême, also pleaded with her to return to the French Court.

Henri had declared that she must be divorced : he cursed himself for having found her such a husband. But before the difficulty

could be set right, she must return to her family — and to him. In strict justice, the young woman can be said to have shown a secret willingness to do as the King desired. It was all the fault of her husband that kidnapping plots failed and that the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Eugenie were vigilant and tender.

The winter of 1609-1610 dragged wearily along for all the parties to the strange drama. The King, chafing and threatening, tried by gout and maddened by love; Montmorency and the Duchess of Angoulême eager to appease him; the Princesse de Condé, of two minds, the stronger growing daily more favourable to her abandoned lover; her husband prowling about Brussels and other foreign cities discharging imprecations and full of despair.

By May 9, 1610, the Connétable de Montmorency had reached the point of writing Condé to say that Henriette Charlotte desired a judicial separation.

On May 14th, while on the way to see Sully,

who was ill, Henri IV. was stabbed to death in his coach, held for a moment by the congestion of vehicles in the rue de la Ferronnerie. The assassin was François Ravailiac, an ex-monk « of low extraction », who had climbed onto one of the wheels.

The Duchesse d'Angoulême had already gone to fetch the Princesse de Condé to restore her to her lover, but the King's death led the husband and wife to patch up their grievances and live unhappily ever afterwards.

Henri IV. was the most human king in French history, a hero on the field of battle, a simpleton among women, and a great man at heart. Among other things, he was the maternal grandfather of Charles II. of England, an equally famous royal lover.

The admirable Sully was the ablest statesman of Henri's reign and for honesty has remained a model ever since.

CHAPTER II

Sun-Basking on the Basque Coast.

Biarritz is first, second or third of the three premier summer resorts of France. The other two are Deauville and Le Touquet. Each one of the three puts itself first. This is natural. We can put them in any order we like.

But whether it is better or worse than its rivals, Biarritz is the place to be in the last days of August and the first weeks in September.

For bathers who like the surf, Biarritz is ideal. The season is composed of a dense mass of mermaids, a few maharajahs, several Romanoffs, and countless jazz bands. Cocktails, champagne and *chemin de fer* are provided to pass the hours not spent in bed. The Spanish may think that there are too many Russians in the town; and the Russians that there are too many Spanish. At moments, it

seems like Moscow without the Communists. And at others like San Sebastian without the King. One wonders sometimes whether Biarritz is really in France. In August and September no one appears to be French. There are many Americans and many more South Americans. There are varieties of hotels. All are good and three are great. Kings stay at the Miramar, the Palais and the Carlton. A queen has been seen at the Continental. And the Prince of Wales likes Helianthe. Statesmen and authors dwell at the Edouard VII., the Angleterre, Le Sahel and La Maison Basque. Elsewhere there are *cocottes*, coquettes and cocaine-fiends. Then there are the women who live in flats and the others who live on flattery.

M. Pierre d'Arcangues, who directs the local propaganda, prefaces a well-produced album of « puffs », with the following observations :

Biarritz doesn't exist. That is to say, there are better towns. Paris is better. New York also in its way. Likewise London and Madrid. But that is of no importance. No town exists.



The MIRAMAR Beach

The world is divided into two categories. Towns which are sympathetic and those which aren't.

Biarritz is sympathetic, San Sebastian is sympathetic; the whole coast is sympathetic.

Why?

Biarritz is sympathetic because the Prince of Wales can live there like a Nobody and a Nobody, if he has enough money, can live there like the Prince of Wales. Naturally, when I say, 'Prince of Wales', I mean, for San Sebastian, the King of Spain. In a word, all sovereigns, princes, grand dukes, lords, grandees, *gens chics*, ultra-rich, super-intelligent, etc. And when I refer to Nobody, I mean the rest of the world.

It is well understood that you who read this are all of the first category.

To resume, the Prince of Wales comes to Biarritz because the proximity of many Nobodies does not disturb him. On the contrary, it creates about him an atmosphere which enables him to live for a few days as free as air. Mr. Nobody comes to Biarritz — let us whisper it — because he will encounter the Prince of Wales, and everyone lives a life of respectful indifference.

That is the secret of Biarritz.

They will tell you that Biarritz is built on the shores of the Gulf of Gascony or on anything else

you like. It is false. Biarritz is built on the principle which I have just explained. And it is a more solid foundation than the Rocher de la Vierge.

Apart from that, the climate, the sun, the ocean, and the jests are known to be second to none. But these conditions are no longer taking. There must be something else, in these days, to create happiness. And it seems that it is to be found here.

Perhaps it is the art of living.

I think of the moral established by *le Roi Pausole* in his states; it was not so stupid : *Don't bother about your neighbour, but do exactly what you like !*

They assure me that *le Roi Pausole* was of Biarritz.

It is quite possible.

What we are not told is that *le Roi Pausole* permitted all his subjects, of both sexes, to go unclothed. Sunburn covered a multitude of skins. Miramar visitors at least wear bathing costumes. It is impossible to see a complete living bronze among the beauties on the hotel beach. Still, there is often much loveliness visible, and the rest is very *chic*.

I notice that M. d'Arcangues mentions San Sebastian interchangeably with Biarritz. I will not do this. For there is a very considerable difference and 58 kilometres between the two places. San Sebastian is more than a Spanish Biarritz. It is the Cowes of the Continent, with additional features peculiar to itself. And it has the finest *plage* and best bathing in Europe.

In 1925, Primo, otherwise General de Rivera, Marquis de Estella, Spain's Mussolini, who had the reputation of being a great gambler himself, decreed that public gambling should stop. It at once came to an end throughout Spain. The loss has fallen heavily on San Sebastian, for the *de luxe* hotels and shops — the best south of the Pyrenees — no longer benefit so greatly from the patronage of foreign crowds.

There is a mystery connected with the extinction of the Spanish gaming houses. It is not a question of who killed gambling, but why was gambling killed?

Primo came into power as the champion of virtue. It is said that his ecclesiastical

political backers logically demanded that he should proceed to suppress vice. This is one explanation. There are others. Through intrigues and wire-pulling, with the same demand coming alike from the virtuous and the vicious, Marquet's casinos were destined to fall. They fell. San Sebastian, the summer home of King Alfonso and the second Mecca — the Medina, in fact — of all roulette and *trente-et-quarante* fiends, thereupon ceased to be a gambling centre. As a result, Biarritz has reaped a rich and unexpected harvest, though, of course, its green tables are only for baccarat.

For sun-lovers and sea-bathers, San Sebastian continues to exert its spell. In August and September the temperature of the water is exactly right. The local bull-fights are unsurpassed, the scenery is delightful, and there is no better bay for racing small yachts. These facts, coupled with the inevitable presence of foreign ambassadors, and Spanish families identified with the Court, make San Sebastian unique. As long as King Alfonso goes to the Miramar Palace in summer, the

villas and the hotels will be peopled by rich occupants. But San Sebastian is not quite what it was. The gamblers have fled. Those of them who are involuntarily compelled to make it their summer headquarters flee nightly to the Bellevue Casino at Biarritz. The number of Spanish-owned Rolls-Royces, Hispano-Suizas and Isotta-Fraschinis one can count in Biarritz every afternoon and evening during the big season is sufficient to make one wonder whether there are any of these cars left for the citizens of other countries.

Spaniards are keen gamblers. I know a Spanish diplomatist in Paris who always plays *chemin de fer* every night in the year, never returning home until after dawn. How he manages to carry on his official duties, I do not know. But he was gambling hard in Trouville twenty years ago and has frequented gaming houses ever since.

On the Basque Coast, one cannot live in San Sebastian without going to Biarritz. And *vice-versa*. If people go across the frontier from Biarritz today, it is to see the bull-fights.

Before they went to indulge in the games forbidden in French casinos. But bull-fighting is like caviare. It makes many people sick. Others will go into ecstasies over the double chin, truculent eye and swollen neck of the fighting bull of Lidia as it gores a horse or a human being to death; or hiss it when it is killed itself.

I have always found the Cowes side of San Sebastian preferable to the side which concerns the bulls. King Alfonso encourages yacht races, in which he and the Queen take a very active part.

« A mountain in the midst of the sea; the trace of bombs upon every house, the trace of the tempest upon every rock, the trace of fleas wherever one goes — this is San Sebastian. » Victor Hugo wrote these lines in 1843. It was San Sebastian without the modern avenues, hotels and villas. The Maria Cristina is, needless to remark, among the principal Continental hotels.

San Sebastian was disagreeably burnt by English troops in 1813. As it has been

agreeably burnt by the sun ever since, one can obtain a complexion like a Rodin bronze without effort; at any rate, in the summer months. The town is the capital of the Province of Guipuzcoa, which is populated by Basques, who also inhabit French territory, just across the border. The Basques of France make good hotel waiters, are fond of their own unspeakable language and, in the females of the species, if educated and young, make peculiarly attractive girls. The girls grow pretty early and ugly soon afterwards.

Since the unofficial gaming monopoly of Marquet has come to an end, the Kursaal, with its beautiful decorations and pink marble pillars, no longer functions, though only about six years old. The Grand Casino, less exposed to wind and wave than the Kursaal, acts as a sort of family sepulchre containing the remains of Baccarat, Trente-et-Quarante and Roulette. There is, I hear, a good chance that the three corpses may be resuscitated. In the meantime, gamblers on the Cote Basque look to Biarritz to supply their wants.

The gala dinners of Biarritz are interesting enough, except that the majority of people don't know each other. They only know the dinner. Whether the gala is at the Palais, the Miramar, or the Casino Bellevue, the *menu* is about the same. I abandoned caviare for ever after my tenth gala dinner, the season before last. The price per head for a gala ranges from 150 to 500 francs, not counting the extras for table decorations, taxes and champagne. There has been nothing more elaborate in recent years than the Franco-Spanish Gala at the Hôtel du Palais, when the restaurant was converted into a Spanish village and almost everyone wore a Spanish costume. I saw at least a dozen pretty women on that occasion.

There are numbers of day-and-night — often, all-night — haunts for the world, the flesh and the devil, but, in certain cases, their foundations are as shaky as the hands of their patrons.

Probably the finest out-door dancing terrace in the world was added to the Pavillon



His Majesty King ALFONSO

Royal, overlooking the sea, but its success depended on the weather. Anything which depends on the weather, even in the South, is doomed to failure. But occasionally on gala nights about 500 people were able to dine on the terrace, dance on the illuminated glass floor, drink champagne and bask in the moonlight. What some of the women wore was as light and transparent as dew. Their jewels were much heavier. I have seen some of the best serpentine dancers imaginable at Bellevue galas and fortunately they were not burdened with drapery. This reminds me that there used to be several particularly good panels near the *boule* table at the Bellevue, showing female figures in the style approved by *le Roi Pausole* with the waves as a background. One was a more than life-sized nude of Hélène Chauvin, who was a well-known *demi-mondaine* some time before the war. I remember her arrival at Trouville Casino one summer, about nineteen years ago, with 80,000 — *gold* — francs, the proceeds of the sale of a house. She began gambling in the

Union rooms, never punting less than 50 louis a *coup*. Within a fortnight, she had lost everything.

The big baccarat room above the Atlantic at the Bellevue Casino is one of the most important in France during the Biarritz season.

At rare intervals Biarritz is provided with a red-letter day, when the King of Spain appears at the Polo Club and plays like anyone else. His cheerful, unassuming air is irresistible. He trots his pony up, between chukkas, to chat with people he knows. And he charmingly seems to know everyone he has ever met.

For a dozen years, Biarritz has possessed a local character in Cigolini. Before he came South, he was at the Meurice. Before the war he was at Claridge's. But it is at the Palais that he has acquired his greatest fame, for Rudyard Kipling has said, *Biarritz is Cigolini*.

CHAPTER III

Playtime for the Prince at Biarritz.

For two or three days before the Prince of Wales' arrival at Biarritz, there had been a carefully circulated whisper that he was coming.

« Are you quite sure about it? » I asked someone who ought to know.

« Yes, he will come! »

My informant smiled mysteriously.

One afternoon, I was playing *chemin de fer*, when an acquaintance came up to my chair, with the remark, « Well, he's losing! »

« Who's losing? » I inquired.

« Why, the Prince, of course! »

Then I understood. He had come, at last. I got up and looked round. The large room, where play was going on, was fairly full.

There was a hum of conversation, broken by the cries of the croupiers and the exclamations of emotional ladies. An Irish adventuress at my table was throwing away the last few notes of a pile which had stood at 100,000 francs the night before. This was rather interesting because she had started play with the remark, almost a snarl, « I hope I'll ruin you all! » I saw a dense crowd standing round one of the tables. I made for it as quickly as possible. There was the Prince, wearing a dark lounge suit, dealing out the cards, rather nervously, but with lightning speed. The shaded lights, the green table, and the solid background of eager onlookers added to the interest of the scene.

The Prince's singularly youthful air was quite remarkable. « He looks 24 at the outside », declared one woman, who stood taking him in as he sat at the head of the table, sandwiched in between an English diplomatist and a lucky little man with a yellow skin and the visage of a monkey. She was right. He might have been less, with his slender

figure, very fair hair and smiling face. General Trotter, his Groom-in-Waiting, was invisible; the Prince appeared to be entirely alone. The other players at the table were simply the ordinary everyday habitués of the casino. There was no one of the faintest interest in the room, with the exception of the Prince himself. He had in front of him several packets of 1,000-franc notes, less than 100,000 francs in all. A further sum, six or seven thousand francs, lay in the centre of the *tableau*. He had just finished the deal when I arrived. Two cards to his opponent and two cards to himself. He looked inquiringly across the table.

« *Carte!* » cried the man who had gone his *banco*.

The Prince turned up a card, a king or a queen, which counts as nothing, and then nodded towards his own two cards without drawing. He had six, if I remember rightly, and, of course, won. Several more coups followed which he also succeeded in winning. Then, when he ultimately lost, the whole *banco* had

not been made up, so his turn with the *sabot* — the box of cards — had netted him a good profit.

I watched him for some time. He seemed very diffident about the game. In spite of this, he looked as if he thoroughly enjoyed it. He made little remarks about the play to the people sitting on his right and left, though they were strangers to him. His friendly spirit and his absence of all mannerism were quite captivating. I went back to my seat, but saw him playing at another table a little later on. Just before dinner, he dashed out of the casino.

He was early at the tables when the night *partie* commenced. The room was brilliantly illuminated and packed with people.

I first caught sight of him, after dinner, standing on one side, quite near the table where I was sitting. He had stopped playing and was talking to a tall, fair woman dressed strikingly in red and gold brocade. He was smoking a large cigar. General Trotter was hovering about a few yards away. I noticed



The Prince of WALES, with General Trotter, at Biarritz.
(HELIANTHE TERRACE)

that the Prince was soon joined by a young man with raven black hair and very dark eyes.

I asked a *commissaire de jeu* to find out who the latter was. But the inquiry led to nothing. The man returned with his palms outstretched. « As the gentleman accompanied His Royal Highness, » he explained, « he was admitted without the customary formalities ».

So that was that. I discovered afterwards that he was a young American.

After they had been chatting for a while, the fair woman and the Prince wandered off to dance. The American and General Trotter remained behind.

In the ballroom, dazzlingly lighted up, a powerful orchestra was making a great noise. Presently, the Heir Apparent, looking more slender than ever with his beautiful partner, was dancing in and out among a crowd of French people. The latter were certainly polite enough not to stop dancing to stare at him.

The Prince and his companion ultimately wandered back to the gaming tables. When

people coming in recognized the slight young man sauntering about with the woman in red the sensation appeared to electrify them. Someone soon got up and gave him a seat. Now and then General Trotter could be seen standing about like a stork in different parts of the room.

Amid all the swarming dozens of well-dressed people, the Prince of Wales stood out like a torch in the darkness. Quite apart from anything else, he was the youngest-looking, the smartest and the most attractive among all the men in the place.

At night, he always wore black onyx sleeve-links with a single diamond in each. When he was waiting for the *sabot* of cards to come round, he often used to sit very erectly with his elbows close together on the table and his head well up, always on the alert. Curious spectators would examine and study him. His dress and jewellery also came in for a great deal of observation and comment. I heard one piping voice declare, « You see he wears a signet ring on his left little finger! » Streams

of similar remarks were pouring out on all sides. He must have heard a good many.

At Biarritz, unlike Cannes and Deauville, only *chemin de fer* is played. There is no baccarat with a stationary bank. During his stay at Biarritz, the Prince spent a good deal of time at cards. When the second afternoon came round, I found him playing eagerly. He looked a little strained under the eyes. With it all there was a grim look of determination about his face which I had not noticed before. Though the sun was shining outside, the green-shaded lights over the tables were all ablaze. Onlookers and players were straggling up. Some had been to the golf links on the hill. Others had been to Chiberta. There was something typically — intensely — English-looking about the Prince, his features as well as his colouring and hair.

In spite of his very evident interest in baccarat, he showed lack of experience and often even made mistakes. On one occasion I saw him put up a packet of notes, deal the cards, and then « stand on five », although his oppo-

ment had not drawn. (If the punter refuses cards and the banker has only five, the latter *must* draw.) The Prince « stood », and, of course, lost his money. « He made a present of it », as the French would say, to the player who had taken the *banco*.

About 2 o'clock one morning, he left the baccarat room with a feminine acquaintance and hurriedly accompanied her to the restaurant where a gala cabaret supper, with dancing, was taking place. He was singularly swift and dextrous in the way he got through the crowds to the space cleared for dancing. He advanced so quickly that people hardly had time to realize that the muscular, and insinuating young man with an open smile, was the Heir to the Throne of Great Britain. There was a terrific crush of dancers also. Most of them had had a good deal of champagne. It was like a Carnival night at one of the cabarets in Nice. The people were principally English, though they were not all from among the baccarat room *clientèle*. The incessant music, the fantastic appearance of

persons and things, added to the presence of the Prince of Wales, produced a lasting impression on my mind. Whether dancing or sitting it out we were all packed up like sardines in a tin. After the dance, the Prince stayed for a while with General Trotter and a couple of companions. Then he suddenly left them. He simply disappeared and did not come back at all. Later, they found him at the gaming tables again.

The last occasion the Prince played baccarat at Biarritz he was apparently importuned a good deal by General Trotter to leave the place. The time had arrived for them to start and the General was anxious. Several times the Prince was induced to leave one table, but only to take a fresh seat the next minute at another.

He is plucky and tenacious. But he has a good deal to learn before he can « defend himself » at baccarat. I hasten to confess that I have not yet learnt this lesson myself, after years of experience and an intimate knowledge of nearly every casino in France.

CHAPTER IV

Among the Basques.

Whether people swear by it or swear at it, all admit that Saint Jean de Luz, though not *de luxe*, is typically and thoroughly Basque. With a little real courage, one can brave and even survive a Basque fête on the night of the *toro de fuego*, in the Place Louis XIV. The Basques take their *toro* very seriously.

Strangers take it with a liqueur, preferably at a *café* with a good view.

The *toro de fuego* is a big metal bull, which discharges showers of sparks in its hurried passage through the throngs. It might be one of the precursors of war in the film version of « The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse ». It would terrify an infant in arms, annoy a saint whose shirt-front had been sprinkled with its fire, or badly bore a gam-



A Summer Day at SAINT-JEAN-de-LUZ

blér anxious to get back to the tables of Biarritz in time to find a good place. At least one beholds a spectacle of an unusual kind. It is in sharp contrast, for example, to a gala dinner. The progress of the *toro* is simply a primitive entertainment designed for primitive minds.

The bandstand in the Place is surrounded by a thousand Basques, surging like a heavy sea. They look sober and orderly, all these men and women of the working class. Most of them lack height. The only colour visible is the bright red of the *bérets* worn by the bandsmen. The night seems dark and the lighting is scarcely brilliant. Rather abruptly the band begins to play. Here and there the crowd shrinks with difficulty to create small open spaces for those who wish to dance the *fundango*. The dictionary calls it « a lively Spanish dance ». It is not lively. It is almost deadly. One dancer can apparently go through it as well as a pair or a dozen pairs. The Nice Carnival air is far more catchy. As for the dancers, they are all but ceremonious. Their

complete absence of levity is quite astonishing. Nothing else leaves an impression.

Suddenly the street lights are switched off and the *fandango* is forgotten. Mass suggestion is at work. There is a general feeling of expectancy. The sensation grows acute. To me it was like waiting in the dark to be attacked by a burglar. But the waiting is not prolonged. A warning comes quickly. A series of ominous explosions thrill the tense nerves of the silent crowd. The sounds come from somewhere round the corner. Almost immediately, the *toro de fuego* appears. It is a plump and fiery animal, as horned and warlike as any in Bayonne or San Sebastian. Raised slightly above the heads of the spectators, it comes charging into the square. There is a stampede. People scatter — or try to scatter — from the rain of sparks. The *toro*, however, is decidedly reckless and far more alarming than a real bull. It only comes to a standstill, amid deafening reports and belching flames, after burning its way from one end of the Place to the other. Gradually the

flames subside into modest splutters. There are a few final bangs. Then the lights come on again and the show is over for a year.

But Saint Jean de Luz has other claims to fame. It has been abandoned by the mosquitos, they say. Moreover, in the local church Louis XIV. married Maria Teresa, daughter of Philip IV. Two centuries later the Empress Eugenie presented the model of a yacht to the same church. It was to mark her gratitude for a narrow escape at sea.

There is more to be said of St. Jean. Alfonso XIII. has had tea at a local hostelry. Edward VII. once lunched in the town and the Prince of Wales has danced at the Réserve. At one moment, Venizelos had a villa near the bay.

In spite of Louis' marriage, Eugenie's gift, Alfonso's tea, King Edward's luncheon, the Prince of Wales' dance, Venizelos' villa and the absence of mosquitos, Saint Jean remains picturesque and modest.

Mazarin — « the fox who succeeded the lion » — Richelieu in his portraits looks more

like an intelligent white rat than a lion — completed his greatest political enterprise when he married King Louis to Philip's daughter. The Grand Monarque had been married by proxy on the Ile des Faisans, in the Bidassoa, a few days before, but he was only united to Maria Teresa in the flesh at Saint Jean de Luz. One historian says that she was next-door to an idiot, « *une femme presque idiote* ». The marriage took place on June 9, 1660. The town was packed to overflowing for the occasion. The King's mother, Anne of Austria, was present with various princes of the blood. All the splendours of the French Court had been concentrated for a brief spell in the humble little town on the Gulf of Gascony.

It was on the Ile des Faisans that Mazarin had concluded the Treaty of the Pyrenees with Don Luis de Haro the previous year. But it was the marriage which promised vitality to the compact between France and Spain. The Cardinal — he was the secret husband of the Queen Mother — came with the Court to enjoy the spectacular side of his own handiwork.

Forty years later — in the autumn of 1700 — Louis XIV.'s grandson, the Duc d'Anjou, to the dismay of Europe, mounted the Spanish Throne as Philip V. « There are now no longer any Pyrenees! » Louis himself cried gladly. If he had been allowed to have his own way at an early age, the Bourbons would never have inherited the Crown of Spain, for he was anxious to marry Maria Mancini, Mazarin's niece, and only the Queen Mother was able to prevent the ceremony. At first, Mazarin had been dazzled. When Anne heard the story, she was blinded. But with rage. Her own secret tie with the Italian was shameful enough. So she talked to him of civil war, though some of her arguments may have been more feminine. It is possible that she even raved at him, for he was quick to turn completely round, *volte face*. « I would kill my niece with my own hands, » he thereupon announced ferociously, « rather than have her elevated by such a criminal alliance! »

The young King stormed, but yielded. After all, he had been trained by the Cardinal.

Among other things, Mazarin had tried to teach him to restrain his passions and hide his thoughts. Louis never learned the first half of this lesson. Born a lover like Henri IV., he was the parent — even the proud parent — of more natural children than his grandfather. Of these, Madame de Montespan bore him eight. The most sympathetic and lovable of his women — by whom he had two children only — was the « tender and timid » Louise de la Vallière, who was virtuous by nature and his mistress by accident. About the time of his wedding to Philip IV.'s daughter, at Saint Jean de Luz, yet another woman, destined first to become his employee, next his mistress, then his wife — in secret — and finally the misruler of France, was in the act of marrying a paralysed poet named Scarron. The widow of Scarron is known to history as Madame de Maintenon.

Louis left behind him among the Basques the memory, still full of glamour, of his wedding at Saint Jean de Luz. He also left some church ornaments. His house, as it is called,



Marriage of LOUIS XIV

stands on the Place which bears his name. Not far away is the Maison de l'Infante, where Maria Teresa lodged before the marriage ceremony.

Today sea-bathing in summer and golfing in winter make Saint Jean de Luz an Anglo-Saxon centre. And in the new quarter, the Golf Hotel, with its own links bordering on the Atlantic, is a very pleasant place to stay.

CHAPTER V

Wellington Hunts the Fox.

It is the Pic du Midi, dark, detached and precipitous — their constant *vis-à-vis* in clear weather — that the people of Pau know best. It is like a sentinel standing on the great rampart between France and Spain.

The silhouette of the Pyrenees, a zigzag of snow in the sky, melts away in the distance to the east and west. There is something feminine in the grace and loveliness of these mountains.

The old capital of Béarn is a lowland town, partly sunk in a valley which extends to the sea. There is a peculiar charm about the place, where the ghosts of historic figures seem still to linger. Here the imagination can flit familiarly among the centuries : from Gaston Phœbus, Seigneur of Béarn, to Queen

Margaret, writer of the *Heptameron*; or from Henry of Navarre to the Pau townsman, Bernadotte, afterwards King of Sweden. Even the ghosts of Wellington and Napoleon frequent the region.

From the earliest times, and especially from the fourteenth century, when Gaston Phœbus wrote *le Miroir de la Chasse*, Béarn has been renowned for its hunting. For five centuries wild boar and deer provided the sport. Then, in 1814, Wellington, after defeating Soult at Orthez, down the Gave de Pau, began hunting the fox. Apart from its military importance, the campaign, known locally as *le passage des Anglais*, has left a lasting trace. The Pau Hunt of today owes its origin to Wellington's caprice.

In the time of Gaston Phœbus, bears used to come down to the plains and rewards were paid for their destruction. Gaston placed hunting above everything else. To him it was an art or a science. « I, Gaston, surnamed Phœbus, Count of Foix and Lord of Béarn », he confessed, almost with a fanfare of trum-

pets, « have divided my life into three parts. One part I have given to arms, another part to love and a third part to hunting ».

He then declared that he had never met an equal at the chase.

The ladies of his court always preferred falconry, which was still flourishing in the reign of Henri IV.

The Béarnais got to know a good deal about horses through contact with the Moors of Spain. When they were at war with the latter, they often captured the enemy's thoroughbreds.

Although horse-racing was only introduced into France from England under Louis XVI., it had thrived at Morlaas in the early days of the Vicomté.

The foxes of Béarn are bold and bad, and not only born thieves, but highway robbers. Not long ago a woman of Oloron-Sainte-Marie, who had been to visit her cousin at a neighbouring village, was returning through the Herrère wood, carrying a couple of live fowls in a basket, when it occurred to her to pick

some cress for dinner. She hardly had time to put down her possessions and turn away, when the fowls began to flutter. On looking round she saw a big fox wrestling with the basket. Reynard had got his head caught and her screams terrified him. The next moment, unable to free himself, he bolted off, reeling from right to left, with the basket jammed on his head like a diver's helmet.

Under Louis XIII., when Béarn was a citadel of Protestantism, the King sent a Commissioner to the district to see that the royal orders and decrees were more assiduously carried out. The Commissioner, a Councillor of State, bore the significant name of Renard. The Huguenots received him with a volley of blank shots. Then, decorated with fox brushes, they besieged his domicile, armed to the teeth. They had made up their minds to rid themselves of his presence. Crying, « *Au renard! A la chasse au renard, forçons le renard dans sa tanière!* », they drove the terrified man from the town.

The fleeting passage of Renard, the King's

Commissioner, left little or no trace. The reign of the other *renard* has lasted in Béarn most of the time since 1814. Certainly there was one great interregnum, after Wellington and his officers left Gascony. But today the dynasty is well-established. Reynard, the fox, is the undisputed ruler of the Pau country.

The late Baron d'Este, a well-known local character, once called Pau the Melton Mowbray — or was it the Market Harboro' ? — of France. Foxhunting is the breath of life to the town and countryside. Without the Hunt, it would be like Monte Carlo without the gambling.

Hunting was launched through the turn of events at the Battle of Orthez. With a French victory Wellington and not the fox would have been the quarry.

There is a story told that Marshal Soult had ordered a fine roast goose at the Hôtel de la Belle Hôtesse, in Orthez, on the day of the battle, but that it was Wellington whom fate destined to eat it. The latter also won the pretty daughter of the inn with whom he carried on a wayside love affair.

When Wellington made La Belle Hôtesse his headquarters, he had with him sixteen hunters and a pack of foxhounds. He proceeded to hunt the country with his officers.

One day the huntsmen ventured too far afield in the course of a brisk run across the wooded territory near the Henri IV. road and the hamlet of Nay. The luck was against them, for they were surprised in the plain of Tarbes by some French dragoons, who promptly adopted offensive tactics. Armed only with their pistols, the British prepared to defend themselves.

The situation, however, underwent a lightning change. What transformed it in an instant from warfare to sport will never be known. But suddenly and silently — and possibly to their own astonishment — the Frenchmen found themselves going hell-for-leather after the fox, shoulder to shoulder with Wellington's officers. The quarry was killed near Garderes, at the Corne de Luquet.

In a short story by Conan Doyle, « How the Brigadier Slew the Fox », there are elements

reminiscent of this incident. The scene is laid behind the British lines at Torres Vedras and the time is 1810.

What do you suppose Milord Wellington had done when he found that Massena had blockaded him and that he could not move his army? I might give you many guesses. You might say that he had raged, that he had despaired, that he had brought his troops together and spoken to them about glory and the fatherland before leading them to one last battle. No, Milord did none of these things. But he sent a fleet ship to England to bring him a number of fox-dogs, and with his officers settled down to chase the fox.

The Brigadier Etienne Gerard, one of the most delightful characters in fiction, describes how, along the road, on which he is gazing from a hay loft, « there came these very dogs, thirty or forty of them, white and brown, each with its tail at the same angle, like the bayonets of the Old Guard ».

In the story Sir Stapleton Cotton, who, by the way, took part in the operations round Orthez, calls out the window to his orderly

for his horse to be brought round by the groom.

There was a ring for fastening bridles at the door of the inn, and the groom tied the horse there while he entered the house.... I leaped into the saddle.... I touched the horse with my spurs, and he bounded forward with such a spring that only a rider like myself could have sat him.... Instantly he went mad — this horse. His eyes blazed. His mane bristled. He bounded from the earth and bounded again, twisting and turning in a frenzy.... And then, as I looked down into the valley, an extraordinary sight met my eyes. The hunt was streaming down it. The fox I could not see, but the dogs were in full cry, their noses down, their tails up, so close together that they might have been one great yellow and white moving carpet. And behind them rode the horsemen — my faith, what a sight. Consider every type which a great army could show : some in hunting dress, but the most in uniforms; blue dragoons, red dragoons, red-trouserred hussars, green riflemen, artillerymen, gold-slashed lancers, and most of all red, red, red, for the infantry officers ride as hard as the cavalry.... But I had little time to watch the hunt or to marvel at these islanders, for of all these mad creatures the very horse upon

which I sat was the maddest. You understand that he was himself a hunter and that the crying of the dogs was to him what the call of a cavalry trumpet in the street yonder would be to me. It thrilled him. It drove him wild. Again and again he bounded into the air, and then, seizing the bit between his teeth, he plunged down the slope, and galloped after the dogs.

It was not long before the Brigadier, who had the best mount of all, was in the thick of the field. As he was wearing an « undress jacket, a uniform simple and dark in itself », there was no particular reason why the members of the hunt, whose costumes were so varied, should give any heed to his presence. The mind of every horseman was concentrated on the chase. No one could imagine that a French officer was actually present in the midst of his enemies. Only the better riders were well up to hounds. Suddenly Gerard became infected with the spirit of the occasion. « And I say to you that this sport is a wonderful thing — full of interest as well as madness. » In a few minutes, he had out-

distanced everyone, including the huntsman. Then he raced through the pack. « The dogs opened in front of me. One or two may have been hurt, but what would you have? »

With one last great effort, he left the hounds behind and only the fox was ahead of him, and not far at that. He unsheathed his sabre and waved it in the air. The supreme moment had at last arrived.

Only then did I understand how difficult is this fox-chase, for one may cut again and again at the creature and never strike him once. He is small and turns quickly from a blow. At every cut I heard shouts of encouragement from behind me, and they spurred me to yet another effort.... In the very act of turning I caught him fairly with such another back-handed cut as that with which I killed the aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia. He flew into two pieces, his head one way and his tail another. I looked back and waved the bloodstained sabre in the air. For the moment I was exalted — superb.

The old huntsman, who was the nearest to Gerard, beheld this strange spectacle with the

air of one struck by paralysis. As the lines of Massena's camp were within sight, the Frenchman turned from the dead fox, saluted and galloped away.

With the actual record of French dragoons and British officers joining forces in pursuit of Reynard in the plain of Tarbes fiction becomes little stranger than fact.

In the year 1840, Sir Henry Oxenden leased the Château of Aureilhan, near Tarbes, for a term of ninety-nine years, and then imported a pack of foxhounds from England. Nearly twenty-six years had elapsed since Wellington hunted the country. The new exponent took up the sport where Wellington had left it.

For a while all went fast and furiously. During the years that the hunting lasted General Auchmuty and J. Cornwall were constantly out with the hounds. Then Lady Oxenden died, and Sir Henry at once gave orders for his hunters to be destroyed. The same fate was to be meted out to the hounds, but Cornwall, who appears to have been a keen sportsman, rescued a dozen couples and

sent them over to Castelbieiilh. Sir Henry Oxenden abandoned his *château* and returned to England. That was in 1847. Soon afterwards, Cornwall brought the hounds to Pau, which then became the established centre for foxhunting. Almost as a matter of course, he became M. F. H.

The members of the hunt, though eager enough, lacked organization and finance. Cornwall, to whose initiative everything was due, remained the leading spirit until 1852, when he was succeeded in the mastership by W. Standish.

It was difficult and expensive to keep the hunt going. Richard Power bought the pack and became Master in 1856. A number of well-known people followed the hounds in his time. The Second Empire was in full swing and the *Château* of Pau was occupied from time to time by relatives or friends of Napoleon III.

In 1861, Captain Alcock followed Power and remained M. F. H. until 1863, when Jasper Livingstone, an American, took over

the responsibilities. In 1874, W. G. Tiffany and a man named Storey shared the mastership between them. From 1875 to 1878, Major Cairnes was Master. He was replaced by Lord Howth — 1878-1879 — who, in turn, yielded the honours and burdens of office to John Stewart¹.

Stewart was destined to have a very well-known successor, for, in 1880, the late James Gordon Bennett stepped into his shoes. Another American, Thomas G. Burgess, came after Bennett, in 1882. Neilson Winthrop, also an American, was the next Master, from 1883 to 1884.

There was an English Master, F. W. Maude, from 1884 to 1885; then another, Sir Victor Brooke, who retained the mastership from 1885 until 1888, when it passed to W. K. Thorn, an American.

1. In April, 1880, under his mastership, the *Pau Hunt* was so greatly exercised by the existence of a private pack, maintained by the Comte de Bari, that it hurriedly dissolved itself. However, the Comte de Bari — a brother of Francis II., King of Naples — abandoned Béarn and left the Hunt in possession of the field.

After the death of Thorn's cousin, Alfred Torrence, who was killed in a steeplechase, the latter's mother gave \$10,000 to have a memorial of some sort erected to the memory of her son. Thorn used the money to build kennels for the Pau Foxhounds, together with stabling for twenty-five hunters.

From Colonel Talbot-Crosbie, Thorn's successor in 1890, the mastership went back to F. W. Maude. After Maude, who was Master from 1891 to 1893, came Baron Lejeune. From 1896 to 1899, Baron d'Este led the field, and then, with C. H. Ridgway, was Joint-Master for 1899-1900.

Baron d'Este again held the mastership alone during 1900-1901. C. H. Ridgway was Master from 1901 until 1903. He was Joint-Master with J. H. Wright, from 1903 to 1905, and then was Master again alone from 1905 until 1910.

Mr. Frederick H. Prince succeeded Mr. Ridgway in 1910. There has been no change since.

CHAPTER VI

Leicestershire in France.

The rôle of a Master of Foxhounds, never an easy one and always requiring special qualities, is often singularly delicate when the field is made up of various nationalities. With seventy to ninety riders drawn from England, France and America — as well as Italy and Spain — the task of the Master presents some of the aspects identified with the command of international troops. He must be a Foch of the hunting field to be a success.

Lord Willoughby de Broke's comments on what a Master should be are worth remembering :

No one is too good to be a Master of Foxhounds. If he be gifted with the average endowment of tact, administrative talent, power of penetrating character, and all other attributes that form the essential equipment of a successful public man, so

much the better; but he should at least be reared in the atmosphere and tradition of country life, fond of sport for its own sake, a good judge of horses and hounds, and the possessor of a remarkably thick skin. For in addition to directing the sport in the field, the M. F. H. is indeed a public man who should have some faculty for the art of government, being ultimately responsible for the welfare of the country over which he presides.

If the riders to hounds at Pau are international, the horses are equally so, for today one can see the pick of the market, jumping horses from Ireland, England, the American Blue Grass country, France and Hungary, all in wonderful condition, in the loose-box stabling in the grounds of the Villa Ste. Hélène.

If in England farmers are at times inclined to exaggerate the value of their crops, they also sometimes hunt themselves or breed hunters, with the result that they generally come to terms readily with the Hunt Secretary. In the Pau district the peasants breed horses, but they do not ride them. Hunting to them is a strictly business proposition. They will count

every hoof mark in a field and claim for a list of items that in variety would do credit to the imagination of a head waiter in a Paris restaurant.

The tiny weather-beaten inns in the villages and hamlets scattered about the Morlaas country always, of course, welcome the hunters' merry tide streaming home after a good run.

Big subscriptions to the Hunt funds are unknown and unnecessary at Pau. The late Lord Chaplin (Henry Chaplin for the greater part of his life) followed a family tradition at one time and contributed £1,200 per annum to the exchequer of the Burton Hunt in Lincolnshire. Subscriptions on such a heavy scale have never been known in Béarn, except in the case of a Master or two. James Gordon Bennett was inclined to spend largely during his mastership from 1880 to 1882. Hunting may cost Mr. Prince £12,000 a year. Among the items of this expenditure is the upkeep of sixty hunters.

Gordon Bennett was the best-known Master of his time. While he was liberal in most

things, he insisted on people paying their fares to Lourdes or Biarritz in the coach which he drove himself. It was beyond the comprehension of the natives of Pau that he should charge for a seat and then spend more money than he received in regaling his passengers with champagne on the journey.

One day when the members of the Hunt were straggling home, after a good run, Bennett called a halt at a deserted spot, announcing that lunch was about to be served. He then led the cavalcade, together with a variety of people who had been following on wheels, into a field where through almost occult activity a large parquet floor had been laid down. Tents with tables bearing all kinds of delicacies, set off by dozens of champagne buckets, awaited the guests. During luncheon the principal performers from Pau Casino entertained the great party. Afterwards there was dancing and revelry for hours.

Bennett's lifelong passion for dining not wisely but too well led him, wherever he happened to be, into pranks and eccentricities

often of an amusing kind. Stories are told about him still. Once he received a cable from a man who wished to acquire the *New York Herald*, believing it to be in the market. « What price are you asking for *Herald*? » Bennett read the message with a sardonic smile. « Two cents », he wired back.

At Beaulieu, where he died, he maintained his reputation for largesse and eccentricity among the peasants. He would knock a man down, without cause, and then present him with a 500-franc note. He owned a good deal of land on the hillside, in Petite Afrique, where his villa stands.

His association with the Pau Hunt was advantageous from every point of view. As a Master with important financial resources, he increased its prestige considerably. Moreover, there was a certain benefit to be derived from the fame of his name, a household word in Paris and New York. If his personal peculiarities occasionally tended to handicap him, he can still be looked back upon as a popular and successful Master.

In the old days, some Masters gambled heavily and baccarat was played by most hunting men. It was an altogether undesirable practice and frequently led to trouble or inconvenience. One member of the Hunt, who was in the habit of receiving a monthly allowance from home, was penniless half the time as the result of gambling. When he had lost his money, he would go to bed until the next remittance arrived. Finally he was admonished by his father. « When I die », the anxious parent advised, « you must never gamble. Never! » The son was full of penitence. « I promise never to touch cards again », he declared. He so far kept his word that ever afterwards he played baccarat wearing white kid gloves.

The history of the Pau Hunt has been peculiarly free from fatal accidents. There is only one death on record.

The victim was Mr. Storey, a Joint Master. It was an accident which need not have occurred, for it had nothing whatever to do with hunting conditions. It was the outcome of

temperament, according to some critics; temper, in the opinion of others. Storey was a hard rider and a good sportsman. On the day he met his death, he was as fresh and fearless as usual. In the neighbourhood of Ouillon, he came upon a gate, with a peasant ready to collect a *pourboire*.

« Open that gate! » he ordered.

The man looked at him a little defiantly.

« When Monsieur has paid me for my trouble! » he answered.

Storey was as open-handed as anyone under ordinary conditions. There was, however, something on that fatal morning which blinded him to everything except the peasant's extremely insolent attitude.

« If you don't open the gate », he called out, « I'll jump it! »

The other remained motionless. There was a pause. Then Storey, with a curse, put his horse at the obstructive timbers. At the same moment — and to this day no one knows what moved him — the peasant pushed open the gate. It may have been that he relented; that

he felt he had been offensive; or, on the other hand, it may have been that he was cunning and able to foresee what actually happened. It is impossible to say with any certainty what motives were behind his sudden action, which coincided exactly with Storey's jump. Instead of clearing the gate, the horse got caught on it and came down. The unfortunate rider, as good as any in France, in falling struck his head on a stone. He died instantly.

Half the falls people take in the course of a season are due to want of nerve at a critical moment. Beholding some more than ordinary bank or ditch, the inexperienced rider forgets that his mount plays an important part in getting him safely over. There is a decided lack of harmony between the rider's anxiety and his mount's capacity. These conflicting conditions bring about disaster. The horse if well trained is always capable of performing his part. But the anxious rider by an unexpected tug at the bridle, the misuse of spurs or a forceful movement in the stirrups hopelessly confounds the animal. Instinct and

experience supply every good hunter with jumping power. Thus loose horses and empty saddles are frequently the result of mental vagaries in those who have taken the tumbles. That is not to say that even the best riders never come off, for they do. But they fall less often than indifferent riders and from other causes. If a rider knows that he himself is not a crack, his courage may fail him through lack of confidence in his own horsemanship. The feeling of apprehension may come with sudden — with shocking — violence just when a cool head and a steady hand would save the situation. A blank mind with no imagination ready to flood it with doubts is almost equal to real skill in the management of a horse.

Many horses, as the French say, are only fit for the butcher. They are. But these are not the animals anyone wants to ride. Most of the horses ridden to hounds in the Pau country are meritorious jumpers. All the regular riders are good, too. It could scarcely be otherwise. Experience makes for perfection and experience is increased three times a week

for months on end. It is not among the veterans or the Dianas that one must look for tricky nerves. But among the riders who either lack familiarity with their mounts or with hunting, or both. There are many inevitable tumbles due to conditions over which neither the man nor the horse has any sort of control. These conditions are like Bismarck's imponderable factors in politics. They can neither be foreseen nor always greatly modified on materializing.

No hunting man or woman of sound experience feels any shame in owning to repeated falls every season. That is to say, if he or she has a clear conscience on the subject of self-control. If hearts have not failed, heads have been cool. It is the fall due to « funk » — or scattered wits in an emergency or an imagined emergency — for which an involuntary blush is memory's just punishment. « Funk » in itself will not unseat a rider. It is the immediate consequence of « funk » — the jerky, ill-timed pull, « dig » or movement — which does the damage. The horse is troubled by

something which he has not expected and does not understand. He has been interfered with in accomplishing an action which is well within his ken : namely, to beat the obstacle that confronts him. He is not a very intelligent animal, but he has a good memory. Remembering how well he has jumped similar obstacles without difficulty, he is thrown out of gear by surprise.

The only conclusion to be drawn is that presence of mind in the rider — which means well-controlled nerves — is as valuable in the hunting field as it is anywhere else. It is a guarantee against mistakes.

There are the falls which are due to no personal error or failing on the part of the rider. They spring from the fact that he and his mount are ill-matched. Either apart may be excellent : together, they fall. The same lack of adjustment is found between certain men and their wives. The divorce court supplies the remedy.

No courage or effort will save a good rider on a bad mount in some circumstances. And

there are circumstances which will separate a good rider from a good mount if they are unsuited to each other. In the words of a French observer, the Prince of Wales has the heart to jump the Pyrenees themselves. « Funk » is unknown to him. He hunted regularly for years until 1929. But he took many tumbles. Why? He would often have escaped mishap if his mounts had been properly adapted to him; that is to say, adapted to his personal requirements. The best rider in the world is likely to come down if he is mounted on the wrong horse. The mount must fit the man like a pair of riding boots. Put the right man on the wrong horse and the harmony, which is so essential between rider and mount in the hunting field, is absent. Then there is no telling what will happen.

Men who follow hounds may be classified as those who are experienced and those who are inexperienced. The experienced not only hunt regularly, but probably have done so for years. Their horsemanship is or ought to be above reproach. Their experience, if it has a

psychological aspect, adds to their natural fearlessness. However often they take a tumble, it is not through an absence of pluck or skill. The inexperienced, on the other hand, must be placed in strictly psychological categories. They are either timid or intrepid. Those who are timid ought never to hunt at all. The intrepid ones have only to emancipate themselves by gaining experience. The process for them may at times involve hardship, but all veterans of the chase consider it a trifling price to pay for a great attainment.

There is something to be said about the « psychology » of the horse, as well as the rider. His eyes are charged with information. « A horse should be courageous, generous, and impulsive », writes John Swire, M. F. H., « and of thoroughly sound constitution. As the eyes give the best indication of disposition, they are the first point the intending purchaser should look at. A good eye is full, lustrous, of good size, medium convexity, mobile and kindly in expression. Horses with small sunken eyes like a pig have seldom a nice

disposition; those whose eyes are too prominent, like a buck's, and not mobile, are generally shortsighted and inclined to shy. A veterinary has only to give an opinion on the soundness of the eyes; it is for the purchaser to draw conclusions as to character from them ».

Swire enters the realm of horse « phrenology » without hesitation, and advises that the animal should be wide between the eyes and that the ears should be a moderate distance apart. « If too close, he will probably be nervous; if too wide apart, bull-headed; he should also prick his ears nicely, and fix his attention on what is in front. When put at a fence, this should be especially noticed. » He goes on to say that a forehead which projects usually indicates a very determined horse, « though perhaps a grand hunter if allowed to go his own way. A horse with a concave forehead, one that 'dips in', is to be avoided, as he may be foolish and queer-tempered ».

Clearly Swire knows what he is writing about, and there is sound commonsense in his

remark, « we should notice whether the head is put on right, and whether there is plenty of room between the jaw bones for his wind-pipe. We should also see if the pipe itself feels big and hangs free of the neck ».

Swire is particularly authoritative where the rest of the anatomy is concerned, and he elaborates the subject with a profusion of detail which leaves the impression that there is nothing left to be said.

His hints on estimating the capabilities of a horse are excellent :

Have the horse trotted out, stand behind him, and see that he moves true, that he does not dish, and that the feet on each side move in an exact line, and do not pass too close to the opposite fetlock joint. If the marks of the hind feet are in front of those of the fore feet, and a little to the outside of them, the horse will probably be a fast galloper and fine jumper, besides being a good walker. Then ride the horse; trot him first with a loose rein to see whether he throws his weight freely on his forelegs, then hold him tight by the head, and, by driving him forwards, test the strength of his hinder parts; if he resents being

collected, suspect his loins or hocks. Afterwards jump him, and if he gives you a comfortable ride and a feeling of confidence — trust, as a rule, to first impressions — have him examined by a first-class veterinary, and buy him if passed sound. Prefer a horse whose legs darken in colour towards the hoof.

A perfect shaped hunter is, of course, hard to find and an expensive article, and, in order to mount himself well and economically, a man must have a knowledge of compensation; he must know where to look for extra strength, should any part of a horse be defective and weak; *e. g.*, weak forelegs do not so much matter if the horse has good sloping shoulders, a well-placed arm, and strong loins and hocks. Again, well-sprung ribs compensate for somewhat short back ribs.

In a cramped plough country, where a horse has often to jump from a stand, generally over ditches or low fences, strong loins and hocks are a necessity, extra good shoulders a luxury; whereas in a flying country, where a horse has to jump up into the air, and descend again, good shoulders are in the case of most horses a necessity and save many a fall.

Years ago, during a visit to America, Cap-

tain Pennell-Elmhirst, an English sporting writer, was a good deal impressed by the fences in Long Island, through personal experience acquired in hunting with Mr. Gray Griswold, M. F. H. « Rugged and awful loomed the ponderous top-rail », he wrote. « ‘ Surely you don’t ride at a flight of rails like that ? ’ I inquired, pointing to a first barricade which met my troubled gaze — to wit, a mortised erection of oaken bars, each of them as thick as a man’s thigh and the lot carried considerably higher than an ordinary Leicestershire gate. ‘ Why, yes ! That’s nothing much ’, » he was told by Griswold. « ‘ The farmers aim at setting their fences at four feet eight, to keep their stock in’. »

Elmhirst quickly found that the fences of four feet eight were, in truth, child’s play in comparison with some of the obstacles to be encountered with Mr. Griswold. This is what he says :

Six foot of timber, surely — and he is within three strides — both ears cocked and both spurs in ! So I gave the old horse a strong pull, gripped

him tight between my nervous knees, chose my panel some three lengths from my companion and sat still for the result. A moment more, and we seemed right under the frowning barricade — then a hoist, a bang, a prolonged quiver, but no fall, though a yard of turf was ploughed up.... Many a green young one have I pushed over — or through — the varied hinderments of our green Midlands : and derived great fun and sport from the process. But nothing short of a pension would induce me to ride a novice upon Long Island. A horse of great jumping power, complete education, and unswerving courage may be a very safe conveyance, and may treat you, moreover, to a sensation as delightful as it is novel. But five-foot timber that is no more likely to break than the mainmast of a ship is about the last form of exercise I should set for the schooling of the youngster, with any hope of his carrying himself and me through — *i. e.*, to the end of a run.... For brisk sensation I commend Long Island to whomsoever shall have found Leicestershire slow, Meath pedantic or the Badminton short of foxes and sport. If the yawning ditches of Meath frightened me last October, the frowning timber of Long Island has this month scared me considerably more. A few more such autumn episodes, and I shall have no nerve remaining even for gentle Northamptonshire.

The naked wire of Australia would seem to be the only terror left to sample — and that I am certainly content to leave untried. By the way, were these Mr. Gordon Bennett's schooling grounds before he took the field in the Melton district? If so, I no longer marvel at the temerity which led him to overestimate Riga's capacity, at a rasping gate below Ranksboro' Gorse — with consequences fortunately less awful than at first appeared.

The Long Island standard is an extraordinary standard : it is not merely a fair test of what a horse and a man can do together. Pennell-Elmhirst, however, ultimately becomes fascinated by the American fences :

As a nerve tonic, to be taken like other tonics (local instance in point, the cocktail) just prior to the meal — *i. e.*, to the regular hunting season — I may safely suggest a ride over the timber fences of Long Island. I will answer for it that the dose will be found refreshing, stimulating, and appetizing. For my part, I had tried it once before; and had then swallowed at a gulp what I now accepted on a willing palate. One's first oyster was startling; one's second was swallowed with more gusto. Whether a complete course would

ensure full relish must, I fancy, depend in a great measure on the organization, mental and physical, of the subject under treatment.... And now I will tell you how the horses upon Long Island are taught to negotiate with ease and certainty these unbending obstacles. Almost every man who has a hunting box or stables on the Island makes a point of fixing up a circular school, round which each horse in turn is practised without rein or encumbrance. Heavy log-timbers form the two jumps, and are raised or lowered by weight or pulley. No horse is considered fitted to begin with hounds till he can go readily round — taking each jump at five feet. Thus taught — and with the ground invariably sound — no wonder he seldom makes a mistake. Riding-to-hounds is a practicable, if not a very widely popular, pastime upon Long Island.

The rare Pau drag hunts provide special thrills the actual number of which can almost be calculated in advance, for the country chosen is difficult in the extreme and stone walls with drops are repeated at short intervals.

Basil Tozer makes out a case for drag-hunting, though few hunting men will con-

sider its strongest point his sympathy for the fox :

How many riders to hounds hate seeing a fox dug out and done to death — particularly after a good run — but haven't the pluck to say so? And how many of us *really* care a button about anything except a fast gallop with plenty of jumping? Drag-hunting, of course, is a hunt where a bag of rags drenched in aniseed takes the place of the fox. This is dragged across a stretch of country and the hounds run the line (scent) just as they would the line of a fox. At the end of the hunt they are given the paunch of some animal to worry and tear to pieces.

The hunting-field is the finest school of horsemanship in the world, especially in the West Country and in parts of Wales and the North Country. There you will see men accustomed to hunting only in flat countries leading their horses down precipitous slopes, where the regular followers of the hunt never think of dismounting.

Setting aside all questions of cruelty, drag-hunting has the following advantages over both stag-hunting and foxhunting.

The line can be laid across a stretch of country where there is no wire, or, if there is wire, arrangements can be made with the farmers to take it

down for a few hours; I have never yet met a farmer or landowner who refused to do this if approached in the proper way.

Preservation of foxes being no longer necessary where there is only drag-hunting, the outcry about poultry killed or alleged to have been killed by foxes ends automatically.

So do the complaints about damage to crops, for, of course, the line of a drag is never laid across land where seeds are sown or where damage to wheat or oats might follow.

Then there is no hanging about at the covert side, and the possibility of a blank day, or of even a poor day's sport, becomes an impossibility.

Last of all, the ever-increasing section of the community which abhors anything in the nature of unnecessary cruelty will no longer have its feelings outraged, as they have been lately, when drag-hunting becomes more general than it is today.

VII

With the Hounds at Pau.

By Lida L. Fleitmann
(Mrs. J. Van S. Bloodgood).

Picture to yourself County Meath's green fields and banks stretching out mile upon mile at the foot of the snow-topped Pyrenees; combine the sport of Melton Mowbray and the picturesqueness of an old Béarn town, the sun of the Riviera with just a thought of the grey British Channel in the weather — and you have Pau. But not all of Pau. You have to go there to fall in love with the place, to learn the charm that draws the group of American, English and French sportsmen back there year after year.

Where else on earth can you follow a pack in full cry across a good hunting country —

and then, when hounds check, look up and see, stretching away on every side, line upon line of mountains not surpassed in beauty and grandeur even by the Alps? Mountains that have a different aspect every day, every hour — sometimes fading away into a misty fog, sometimes standing out distinctly, very near and clear; now mauve and pink like the Tyrol, now angry, grey and forbidding like the Rockies. Then hounds begin to whimper again and you are once more in green old Ireland. It is like hunting in Heaven!

Historically it seems quite fitting and proper that this lovely corner of France should be an oasis of Anglo-Saxon sport, for at the time of the Black Prince it was held for three hundred years by the English. And with true national tenacity they have never quite let it slip from their affections. The Duke of Wellington, with his officers, was the first to hunt the country, and he had sixteen couples of foxhounds kennelled at Orthez. But it was not until 1840 that the Pau hunt was really established.

As a hunting country Pau at first sight presents a bundle of paradoxes. One scarcely expects to find good foxhunting in this picturesque and sunny valley at the base of the Pyrenees and yet one day with hounds will quickly prove that one cannot always judge a book by its binding. Moreover, curious as it may seem, Pau's best hunting country lies not, as one might suppose, in the broad valley through which the Gave burbles along like some Swiss glacial stream, but up on the Plateau du Pont Long. When motoring to most of the meets, it is a climb up and up until one might suppose one were going mountaineering rather than foxhunting. But suddenly one finds one's self on a great, broad plateau, checkered for miles with green fields and banks and one no longer wonders that the Pau Hunt is able to give good sport amid surroundings of beauty.

Possibly the best hunting in the world is found in grazing countries, but here again Pau presents its paradox and is the exception which proves the rule. One gallops, not over grass,

but over gorse — locally known as *thuya* — which extends mile on mile and is cut by the peasants to be used or sold as cattle bedding.

The fences, similar to those found in Ireland, consist of banks and ditches, but these are not made, as in Ireland, merely to keep the cattle in and drain the land. They are built principally to divide the peasants' holdings. Now and again one comes across what is called a *tombeau*, consisting of two big banks with a wide space between, making a formidable jump. The origin of the *tombeaux* is rather curious; they are found only where the peasants have quarrelled over their land boundaries and each has built his bank where he thinks it should be — thus forming a double bank.

One gets bigger banks and wider drains in Meath. Even a good Meath horse, however, has his work cut out for him if hounds cross the line where Pau holds its Point-to-Point and Hunt races — out St. Jammes and Auriac way. And what is more, the enclosures being small, one is in the air all the time.

Technically the country is more like Kildare than Meath; the banks and ditches are trappy and here and there are a few stone walls, gates and hedges. It is over this flying country that the occasional drags are held — at Oloron, Pontacq and Nay. Both foxhunting and drags require a clever horse, and although, owing to the gorse, the going is not heavy, a horse with plenty of staying quality is most necessary.

Thoroughbreds can and do hunt the country most brilliantly, but for the average rider a three-quarter-bred horse which has hunted the bank country of Ireland is the ideal mount. The main requisite in Pau — and for that matter pretty nearly everywhere — is a horse which looks where he is going. Although there are no rabbit holes, most of the drains are covered over, and the narrower the drain the more deceptive it proves to be.

Some persons like to assert that you can hunt Pau on a polo pony. So you can; so, too, you can hunt Meadow Brook or even Leicestershire, if you care to putter along behind

and never see or even hear hounds. But if you want to live with hounds and really go straight, the best which Ireland turns out is none too good for Pau.

We all know that the problem of scent has yet to be solved and that not even the cleverest of huntsmen can always predict a good scenting day. But I believe I am safe in saying that Pau is unique in being able to boast good sport under conditions that elsewhere would be hopelessly unfavourable. Scent seems to lie as well on those days when the sky is cloudlessly blue and the sun as bright as it is in Switzerland as it does on those equally frequent and more propitious occasions when the Pic du Midi and the long range of glittering mountains have vanished in mist and rain and the whole landscape, the gorse, the banks and the muddy roads between the straight lines of Lombardy poplars, are blurred and soft and wet.

The opening meet in November cannot, of course, boast the huge field of Kirby Gate, although its smaller but none the less fashion-

able field is just as well turned out. On all sides are scarlet coats and white leathers, London toppers and well-cut habits, while here and there is the horizon blue of the Saurmur officers. Meadow Brook might well take a leaf from Pau. Frederick H. Prince, the M. F. H., believes in doing things well, and his six hunt servants are spotlessly turned out and, like himself, mounted on clean-bred horses, the majority of which he brings over from America.

Variety has long been called the spice of life, and what can be more varied than to hark back to one's waiting car, after a long day with hounds, amid scenery of unparalleled grandeur; to pass through quaint towns which date back dimly into the past; to catch a glimpse now and again, as one does in Switzerland, of snow-peaks at the end of some narrow and tortuous street, and, silhouetted against the blue and mauve of the mountains, scarlet coats and groups of tired homeward-bound horses? Or to see oxen, with their primitive yokes, ploughing the fields and to

hear the quaint *patois* of the Béarnais peasantry mingling with the rich brogue of the many Irish stablemen.

And then perhaps on reaching Morlaas, ancient Béarn's capital, in which was born the mother of Henry of Navarre, one sends one's horses home and goes into the famous Puts inn. A great open fireplace greets one, on whose blackened mantel, high above the head, stand rows of shining brass candlesticks and ancient pots and pans. There, amid smoke and good cheer, feeling luxuriously tired, one sits down to dry one's clothes and have a delicious meal.

In closing I must not forget to mention the Hunt races held at the end of the season in April. There is the Master's Challenge Cup for subscribers of the Hunt and, most sporting of all, the unique stable match held at Auriac. This is for three horses from each of the principal stables. Run in colours and judged on points, it excites the keenest rivalry.

But one might go on indefinitely recounting Pau's endless attractions for sportsmen —

suffice it to say, perhaps, of Pau, as the English poet said of his lady-love :

« None knew you but to love,

« None named you but to praise. »

CHAPTER VIII

The Fox.

As the fox is not an unimportant element in foxhunting, there is something to be said about him. « To those who hunt to ride », wrote Lord Howth, M. F. H., « the stout captive fox shows twice as good sport as his legitimate brother, let it be in England, Ireland or France, and I can give proofs of it for each country ».

With a character of this sort, Reynard of the Pyrenees is entitled to every consideration. He is caught uninjured — generally in the mountains — is kept until the following morning, and is then placed in a covert and hunted. Not knowing the country, he either makes a long point or a long ring run and is almost invariably killed. In England, the fox more often than not goes to earth after the

shortest kind of a run. He can be dug out and devoured, certainly, but this is not as satisfying to most people as a long gallop with plenty of jumping.

The Pau foxes *run*. That is to say, they run well, as a rule, from start to finish. Reynard respects his own life and believes that discretion is the better part of valour. It is only on very rare occasions that he shows suicidal tendencies and awaits the hungry pack. His usual *modus operandi* is to flee with terror — and immense energy — for several miles, and then double back, as his cunning begins to reassert itself, only giving up the ghost after a fast hunt which may have lasted from one to two hours; frequently longer. The hounds know what they are about and they see to it that they are not cheated. Among riders, the favoured few who are able to keep close up to the pack throughout can return to Pau with the certain knowledge that they have had the best sport that intelligence and money can provide.

Lord Howth, while recognising the great

advantages of the Pau fox — and by the expression I mean the wild fox taken and placed in a covert remote from his native wood or mountain-side — over the fox hunted in the Shires, rather inconsistently objected to the use of hunting jargon about « finding ». The point would scarcely be worth mentioning if it had not been raised by the man who above all others revelled in the particular variety of hunting usual in Béarn. Howth, by the way, agreed to contribute £5,000 a year towards the maintenance of the Pau Foxhounds when he became Master in 1878.

What may be called the virgin fox has indeed been hunted in the Pau country. Under one Master — Lejeune — it was regularly hunted, as well as the fox placed in a covert. But as it provided only the somewhat desultory form of sport customary in other hunting countries, it was ousted in favour of the freed fox.

Howth himself believed in scenting up Reynard with polecat essence. « I can scent up a fox so hounds could hunt him when an hour gone or more. I could put a flavour on him

— polecat's essence — that drives hounds wild with ecstasy. » No doubt a Paris perfumer, if called in as a consulting expert, could even go one better than Lord Howth, but thirty-five years have passed since the lines quoted were penned. Why a fox placed in a covert should not be « found », I fail to see. But Howth appeared to resent bitterly the use of the expression. Its use was a matter of form at most, but it was, and continues to be, a matter of form in hunting countries far distant from Pau. Elegant variation — if the huntsman's language will permit such an exalted term — can always be discovered in « a stout fox was started up », or « a fine straightnecked fox was got afoot ». After all, hunting jargon sounds better than « a fox anointed with Lord Howth's famous polecat essence was dropped from an aeroplane, whereupon hounds, maddened by the scent, which was reminiscent of poison gas in the war, ran faster than the Sud Express ».

If Howth had not been a very good sportsman and a passionate devotee of the chase, as

practised at Pau, I should not have resurrected his comments, which were really directed against Mr. F. W. Maude, M. F. H. at the time, another excellent British sportsman.

Apart from his slight animus towards Maude, Howth wrote interestingly enough, and with great authority, on foxhunting. He is at his best in the following lines :

The mythic Goddess Diana presides over the Chase, and wisely arranges different laws to suit different countries. In France the pursuit of the wild deer in his native forests demands the primary tutelage of the goddess. It is a form of hunting replete with art and science, and many are the volumes written on venery connected with it. The presence of Her Majesty's (Queen Victoria's) deer cart from the Ascot kennels, with its illegal freight, in the glades of a Fontainebleau rendezvous would create as much displeasure as the sight of a bag with a fox in it at an English covert side. The goddess gives the French fox no place of honour. Let him be wild or captive, it is all the same to her. Diana in Great Britain cares not for the chase of deer — he is no more to her than the fox in France, but in England the wily animal is surrounded by a halo that foreigners do

not appreciate; the purity of the chase must be kept intact.

After writing this, he confesses, « I explained to Mr. Robert Watson, M. F. H., the father of Irish hunting, that pursuing lifted foxes (with a dash of scent) affords twice as good sport for those who hunt to ride ».

Nevertheless, he was incensed with Sir Victor Brooke — M. F. H. before Mr. Maude — for not having liberated foxes defined as such in the hunt reports published in the *Field*. The question savours of obsession, at moments, for we find him volunteering, « Under my mastership every fox turned down had his natural scent strengthened; otherwise half were lost or would afford a poor run ».

He gives another line or two to the scent question in, « The run of the season under my mastership was from nigh St. Jammes to the Drill Field of Tarbes — a point of twelve miles. The scented fox got ahead, and was lost over and over again in his natural state, until the artificial scent waned and the run ended ».

Sometimes there was a dearth of foxes, « even with the splendid wooded outskirts, such as Bénéjacq, Sauvagnon, and Artix Wood », but, fortunately for the sport, the experts now engaged in catching foxes, have other hunting grounds. Consequently in these days, when organization has reached the level of a fine art, there is no danger of a shortage.

Motors have made fox-catching at a considerable distance a comparatively easy and absolutely certain undertaking. The further a fox is from his lair the better he runs. The mountain fox is particularly wild, incomparably wilder than the average English fox, which is almost a domestic animal, with every encouragement to lead an easy life on a diet of plump fowls.

Without making invidious comparisons, the hounds maintained in these days excel in every respect the packs of the past.

Polecat essence, it is unnecessary to add, is quite unknown under existing conditions. But Lord Howth could never say enough in

its favour. « Let Lord Willoughby take a dog fox from Shuckburgh earths », he wrote, « and turn him down in Chesterton Wood with a rubbing of polecat essence, and give him twenty minutes' start out of Chesterton Wood, and great would be the run that would ensue. » This recommendation was made about 1894.

Howth had been Master of the Pau Hunt in 1878, but hunted the country for many years afterwards. One of his remarks is of exceptional interest. « Pau », he declares, « could be developed under certain conditions to become the great central sporting rendezvous on the Continent, with 150 horsemen out with hounds, and with plenty of money available to pay for field damages. My words are not vapourings and my ideas are matured ».

His words were, indeed, approximately correct. Roughly there were thirty riders in 1893-1894. Nowadays there are generally ninety and occasionally more than one hundred. There are often a few newcomers and the newcomers always come back.

CHAPTER IX

Morlaas.

The centre of the hunting country today is a village called Morlaas.

Almost a thousand years ago, it was the first capital of the Vicomté of Béarn.

The road to Morlaas on a bright November morning is rarely lonely. Ox-carts, cyclists with guns and dogs, an occasional car, now and then a market woman with a load of unsold vegetables, grooms with led-horses, and a taxi or two from Pau flit by, all at a different pace. But the traffic of the small highway is tranquil, colourless and silent. Only the ox-carts, more often drawn by cows, are picturesque. When hounds are meeting out this way, there are red coats to add brilliance to the scene. The Kennels lie well along the road, nearer Morlaas than Pau, in

pretty, wooded grounds, on the right. If the dog-hounds are out, one may catch the bay of the bitch pack as one drives past.

As the car swings to the right up the big hill with the sun shining down on a carpet of red-gold leaves, openings in the trees here and there flash glimpses of glistening peaks, which seem to float in blue air.

As the road, still mounting the hillside, twists round to the left, the Pyrenees, stretching the whole length of the southern horizon, come into view. The beauty of the scene, on a day when the mountains are clear, tends to add immensely to the glow of interest which stirs the newcomer during his first moments in this corner of France. The snowclad range is more impressive from the country north of Pau than from the Boulevard des Pyrénées itself. That is because the mountains seem to rise straight from the plain. From Pau there are layers of foothills noticeable in between to detract from their singular grandeur.

From the big hill with the panorama of high peaks, the road gradually descends into

Morlaas, which is composed of one long main street. The street of Morlaas is scarcely a street at all but a well preserved road leading somewhere else, with a row of small and rather insignificant houses on each side. Some distance along, a *place* breaks the contour of the row on the right. Is it really the Place which breaks it or the mellow old Church of Sainte Foi, of the pale pink porch, waiting after eight centuries to captivate and charm the eye?

Sainte Foi has a romantic enough origin, for it was founded by the Seigneur Centulle in a spirit of penitence for having married a lady named Gisla. The marriage was dissolved on the ground of consanguinity.

Gisla retired to a convent, though not before she had given birth to a son, later famous as Gaston IV., Lord of Béarn. Gaston was a great hater of Infidels, as well as a patron of horseflesh. His interests embraced religion and racing. This is clearly brought out in his allocation to the Prior of Sainte Foi of a fixed percentage on the money taken in con-

nection with entries for the horse race held each year at Morlaas. In return the Prior was compelled to house and entertain for one day the winner of the race.

Quite apart from its archaeological interest, Sainte Foi is a monument to the perseverance of a whole host of little people who over a long period wrangled incessantly with the State for funds to restore the porch. That success ultimately crowned their efforts is evident to anyone who goes to Morlaas.

There are strange things in Morlaas which one does not see, for they are only memories. But they are amazingly full of colour and movement. Crusaders and courtiers, prelates, penitents, and reformers, pass before the mental vision in an endless stream. The early Lords of Béarn ruled their little state from Morlaas and sometimes they were visited by a Spanish sovereign. There are no traces of these former splendours. There is not even a ruined castle left to recall them. Still, the archives show that they existed in plenty. Sainte Foi alone is tangible and memories

cluster upon it like evergreen vines, beginning with the love affair of Gisla and her erring kinsman. We can imagine that Gisla was very pretty and that Centulle wavered from the straight path on this account. He was scarcely a bad man and the son of the union proved to be a good one. It was the latter who, as Gaston IV., a veteran of the Siege of Jerusalem, welcomed an invitation to fight the Moors beyond the Pyrenees. At that time Morlaas was a commandery of the Knights of Malta.

The Moorish occupation of Spain provided plenty of Saracens considerably nearer at hand than the Holy Land. Navarre and Aragon formed the only Spanish territory free from the yoke. And Alfonso, King of Navarre, who sought the aid of Gaston, was engaged in an everlasting war with Spain's dusky conquerors.

As a former companion in arms of Godefroi de Bouillon, Gaston answered the call, hastening from Morlaas across the mountains. It seemed to him that another Crusade lay ahead. He soon showed that he was a warrior of such

mettle that the King placed him at the head of an army. After he had defeated numberless Moors, he induced the King to create the Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

When he had returned to Morlaas well laden with glory, Alfonso paid him a State visit. We can assume that the King appreciated his military qualities and high character, though there was a distinct motive for the visit apart from compliments and gratitude. Alfonso aimed at becoming Gaston's suzerain. Apparently any objections which may have existed in the minds of Gaston's wily advisers were hurriedly dispelled by Gaston himself. He at once accepted the proposal, remembering that the King of Navarre could always offer him access to hordes of Moors, who served as a human game preserve on the other side of the border.

Although Gaston was essentially a soldier, at home he generally found time to watch over the best interests of his own people. Among other things, he granted a charter of liberties to the inhabitants of Morlaas. But it

was in fighting and killing Infidels that he really excelled. He headed a last expedition to Spain and defeated eleven Moorish kings in pitched battle. In the end, he was slain on the field.

Morlaas never produced a more determined Moor-baiter than Gaston. Alfonso's brother, Peter, was also an adept, but he, of course, had his own home to defend. Once when he had defeated five coloured kings in quick succession, he added five Moors' heads to his shield. It was the only way he could permanently preserve his trophies.

After all, the Moors were the *bêtes noires* of Europe in those days¹.

1. Henri IV.'s relationship with the Moors was quite different from that of the earlier Lords of Béarn. In 1602, he was the object of overtures proposing a general Moorish rising in Spain. Laforce, the Governor of Béarn and French Navarre, managed the subsequent negotiations so successfully that, by 1604, the Moors had offered to deliver up three good Spanish towns — one, a seaport — to supply 80,000 armed men, and to deposit 120,000 ducats at the Château of Pau, in exchange for Henri's military intervention against the Spaniards. Though the plan failed through treachery

The only lasting benefit they conferred on Béarn was involuntarily to give the natives a combined lesson in personal bravery and in what horses should be. Arab stallions were often taken in battle and brought to Béarn.

For centuries the Moors handsomely provided warfare for any Prince who wanted the thrill of bloodshed. Spain, in consequence, became a free school for warriors.

Long before Gaston IV. was born, his ancestors were constantly crossing the Spanish frontier to fight. Centulle I., son of Centulle the Wolf, Duke of Gascony, was the first ruler of Béarn. He died before A. D. 845. It was left to his great-grandson, Centulle, to lead an army against the Moors. This Centulle — and there were several to rule — had as an ally Sanche Abarca, King of Aragon and Navarre. The Moors at that time were very powerful and had more than once fought their way north of the Pyrenees.

in official quarters, both Henri and the Moors clung to the idea of ultimately joining forces.

Gaston X., or Gaston Phœbus as he is better known, set out for the wars to win his spurs at the age of 15. While he never attempted to make the killing of men his chief aim in life, he acquired a sound reputation and experience and when he returned to Béarn he was acclaimed a hero. From his own writings, I should imagine that he preferred killing more ordinary big game. Gaston Phœbus reigned over Béarn from Orthez and not from Morlaas. But the sound of armed horsemen and the tramp of pikemen could still often be heard in the older capital. In 1372, when the Duke of Anjou, with a French army, came to lay siege to Lourdes, Morlaas bristled with pikes, lances and halberds. Pau also reflected the same martial spirit.

There is a story that after the Duke of Anjou had failed to take Lourdes, he asked Gaston Phœbus to bring influence to bear on the governor of the castle, Pierre Arnaud de Béarn. He promised restitution of the county of Bigorre, of which Gaston pretended to be heir, if the latter would order Pierre to Orthez.

Before leaving Lourdes, Pierre invested his brother with the command of the place, and made him swear to remain faithful to the King of England.

Gaston Phœbus received him in a magnificent manner, and loaded him with gifts.

« The defence of Lourdes », he declared, with a friendly gesture, « exposes me to the anger of the Duke of Anjou. It would be well therefore for you to surrender the place to me ».

Pierre shook his head.

« No », he answered, « though I am poor, and your kinsman, Count, my allegiance is pledged to the King of England ! »

Upon hearing this, Gaston, losing all control of himself, drew his poniard and stabbed him.

The crime was useless to the Duke of Anjou, for Jean, the brother of Pierre, obliged him to raise the siege.

Minting money was a privilege which Morlaas had enjoyed since the days of the Centulles. It was excellent money — bronze, silver, and gold — and circulated far and wide. In 1290,

Edward I. of England, who was master of Guyenne, had tried to suppress the circulation, but an outcry from bishops and barons damped his ardour and Morlaas maintained its mint. The fact that gold pieces were struck at Morlaas is taken to be evidence of Béarn's absolute independence. At a later period a mint was established at Pau, but under Henri IV. — who was II. of Béarn and III. of Navarre — all coinage was merged into that of France.

What amazes everyone concerning Morlaas today is its almost complete absence of visible reminders of the past. In this respect it finds its exact opposite in Carcassonne. It lacks, of course, all trace of ramparts, which are common enough in many old French towns. There are no crumbling towers, damaged turrets or ancient gates. There is Sainte Foi. There is that and little else to help the imagination back through the centuries. But the church makes up for many things one would like to find. Though it is obviously old and no less obviously much restored, it gives a *cachet* to Morlaas. The pale pink of the porch — a very

modern reproduction — is a most pleasing thing to see. It forms a delightful contrast with the grey stone of the belfry.

Round about there are many hamlets equal in antiquity to Morlaas itself. They show on the hunting maps and shine brilliantly in the Hunt Journal. That is because they are sprinkled over the best hunting country on the Continent. They are unknown in any other connection in spite of their thousand years of life. At the present time Lescar, Andoins, Miossens, St. Jammes, Anoye, Navailles, Gabaston, Momas, Maucor, Espoey, Idron, Baleix, Lespourcy, Espechède, and Serres only conjure up visions of great gallops and glorious jumping. Yet every one of the tiny settlements mentioned is referred to in records nearly ten centuries old. Some of these hamlets or villages, including Serres-Morlaas and Maucor, were classified as being under the church bell — *sous son clocher* — and incidentally under the parochial domination, of Morlaas. St. Jammes demanded greater independence.

With the decline — in a sense almost the

complete disappearance — of Morlaas as an active community, it is curious to find that it was the residence of a small throng of members of the minor nobility as recently as 1767. The principal families of the town in that year were represented in the following list :

- Noble Jacques de Caubios;
- Noble Jean de Nabos, Seigneur de St. Jammes;
- Noble Simon de Bonneventure de Casenave;
- Noble Pierre de Nabos, Seigneur de Barthe,
Lieutenant-Général de la Sénéchaussée;
- Noble Pierre de Sancerre, ancien Capitaine de
Grenadiers et Chevalier de l'Ordre Militaire de
St. Louis;
- Noble Alexandre de Lagarde, Seigneur de Beu-
caire;
- Noble Guillaume de Salinis, Seigneur de Ba-
satgle;
- Noble Pierre de Lostalot, Seigneur de Lassalle
de Lannepta;
- Noble de Jouet, Seigneur de Latour.

If the guillotine later accounted for all the well-born people in Morlaas, no others of the same class have since that epoch shown a

tendency to replace them, for socially the town — the village — is a desert.

During one period, the births, marriages and deaths in the Parish of Sainte Foi were recorded occasionally on playing cards. One note, recording the birth of a girl, is dated Aug. 18, 1733. It is on the back of a lusty looking knave of hearts.

Morlaas has a weather-beaten inn, familiarly known to all hunting people in this district as the Maison Puts, which dates from 1863. Here during the hunting season, a hungry crowd of followers of the chase are, at the invitation of the M. F. H., wont to foregather after a hard run. Café des Acacias labels the building outside, but, once within, it becomes the hospitable eating house of Mme. Puts. The name of Puts is engraved on the memories of many people who have known what it was to ride for two or three hours in the cold and wet on an empty stomach and then found themselves at Morlaas, still 10 kilometres from Pau. The sudden and unexpected shelter from a winter's day; the great open fireplace, with chickens

grilling on the spit; and the warmth of the kitchen and of the Armagnac have made indelible impressions concerning the inn on several generations of hunting men and women. Puts and the capacity to cook seem to be synonymous. One son Puts was a *chef* at Sherry's, in New York. The daughter of the house is now the hostess, though a brother who has always remained in Béarn is absolute master of the kitchen. The ducks and the chickens destined to be devoured by members of the Hunt are fattened at the very threshold of the chamber wherein the spit revolves, silently converting their kindred into succulent morsels. Savarin himself would say a good word for the culinary genius whose one aim in life is to merit the compliments which are showered upon him by those from whom he has so skilfully and delectably removed the chilly pangs of starvation.

In addition to being armed with a formidable *batterie* of pots and pans, the kitchen Chez Puts possesses a modern range, and a charcoal fire, as well as a cavernous chimney-piece with

the old-world spit. There is a *salle à manger* upstairs, but it is ignored, even unknown. In order to distract the mind a little from cookery at close quarters, there are several framed souvenirs of the Pau Hunt. One is a sketch of the kitchen itself crowded with patrons of the chase. Another is a large faded photograph of a 19th century motor car, quite a prehistoric vehicle, surrounded by peasants. The peasants are about to be warned against the inconveniences of barbed wire by the late Mr. C. H. Ridgway, M. F. H. I may add in parenthesis that the warning was efficacious. The third souvenir of hunting is a panoramic photogravure of the Hunt itself in 1892. The riders stretch — or trail — across the picture. One admires all these art possessions automatically before counting ten brass candlesticks on the mantelpiece.

« Why are there no candles? »

Madame Puts II. or III. or it may even be IV. comes forward with a mellow smile.

« Monsieur has not noted the electric light! » she murmurs triumphantly.

At which one either asks about the *fois gras* or when the younger ducks will be ready to die. It is quite permissible to glance out in the farmyard and swiftly observe the raw material for future epicurean repasts. It is at the cackling, quacking or gobbling stage of the brief journey to the luncheon table.

There is a typical country *café* atmosphere in the outer room, with its long brown tables and rows of bottles at odd heights here and there. It is not this aspect of the Maison Puts which is interesting. It is the other : the Béarnaise farmhouse kitchen where *chic* modern Dianas meet and eat with their male companions of the hunting-field.

While Morlaas as a capital has been dead for centuries, and as a county town since the Revolution, at least it is brought to life nearly every week each winter by the gay crowds who hunt the fox in the surrounding country.

I think Morlaas is the soul of Béarn. It is not material enough — not sufficiently vital — to be the heart.

CHAPTER X

Round About.

Wilbur Wright's first flight at Pau took place in December, 1908. The territory north of the town called the Pont Long — a mystifying name — is where he tried his invention and proved that he could fly. There is a military aviation ground there now, as well as the two racecourses. Nearly all the favourite meets of the Pau Hunt are sprinkled about in the region beyond the Pont Long, which, many centuries ago, extended across Béarn, from Bigorre, in the east, to the borders of the diocese of Dax, in the west.

Many streams, including the Luy de Béarn, flow through the Pont Long. There is a certain marsh from which Henri IV. was once rescued with great difficulty. He had been after snipe and, in an unwary moment, had

stepped into danger. But « le Bon Henry » was not the only celebrity identified with the Pont Long district. Wellington is said to have had a lucky escape there, too, but of a different sort. It was during the *passage des Anglais* — the campaign of 1814 — when, as we know, he did a little foxhunting at odd moments. It seems that a French spy had discovered his plans and had reported them to Marshal Soult. Very unwisely he reported them to an acquaintance also. Soult prepared to capture Wellington. The military hero of the Holy — or Unholy — Alliance was to be taken by surprise at Navailles early on the following day. In the excitement caused by the joyful prospect, the French spy's acquaintance had been forgotten. But he, correctly believing that information delivered in the right quarter is always marketable, approached the British Staff. There is no record of the number of gold pieces which changed hands. We can imagine without effort that the payment was liberal. The result was that Wellington, instead of being taken like a rat in a trap in

the bright sunshine of a February morning, shrugged his shoulders and ate his breakfast in peace somewhere else.

There are few districts in France where tradition has such a marked hold on the people as in Béarn. Centuries and revolutions have failed to obliterate the local sentiment which envelops the name of Henri IV. The Béarnais have detached it from political and religious associations and crowned it in their hearts. To them, Henri seems still the leader of their race. Because he once trod a country path, it is known still as the path of Henri IV. If he used a country road, it is revered as his. There is the Maison Lassansaa, at Billère, close to Pau, where he was nursed by a peasant woman in his infancy. This house was long afterwards recognised by justice as a sanctuary. Fugitives who reached it could defy the law.

Some places involuntarily escape the Henri IV. tradition. Lescar, almost as old as the hills, and not more than 5 kilometres beyond Billère, is one of them. But the village has a past. The past includes a long line of bishops.

The last of the bishops disappeared in 1789. What was their cathedral — outwardly a modest-looking church — still stands, and is supposed to have been the burying-place of Marguerite of Valois — the grandmother, and not the wife, of Henri IV. — as well as several Kings of Navarre. It was admitted nearly a century ago that there was « no longer any animation in the streets of this ancient place ». This is truer than ever today. Everything has departed except the farming community. From all reports the soil round about is excellent and the peasants thrive. Lescar is in the list of Pau Hunt meets.

The Château of Gelos, which is not in the hunting country, but on the south side of the Gave de Pau, was called before the Revolution a « second Versailles ». It belonged to Baron Duplaa, of the Parlement de Navarre, who appears to have been very opulent. His fêtes were the talk of the country. Every day the avenues leading to the *château* were crowded with the smartest equipages. Beauty, brilliant wit and fashion are said to have reigned jointly

in his *salons*. We are not told where the beauty or the brilliant wit came from. One Dugenne solemnly admits that it is all very surprising « at 200 leagues from Paris. » It is.

Twenty-five years later, Duplaa entertained Napoleon and Josephine. During his brief visit, the Emperor managed to issue eleven decrees. That was in 1808. Three years passed and then in 1811 the Haras of Pau was moved from the Domaine des Astous to Gelos, provisionally at first; then — in 1817 — permanently.

« In former times », Dugenne reminds us, « Béarn was renowned for the excellence of its horses. The Navarre breed was unrivalled, especially for light cavalry. But more recently breeders have found it more profitable to give their attention to mules. »

Nearly one hundred years have gone by since the mules predominated and at the present time horse-breeding is doing well enough in the region. One stallion recently acquired by the haras is reported to have cost 250,000 francs.

Of course, the hunting exerts an encouraging influence on the horse-breeding. The steeplechasing and hurdle-racing at the two hippodromes throughout the winter can also reasonably be assumed to intensify the interest in jumpers.

The racing is almost as much a part of the Pau season as the hunting and ranks high in a sporting sense. It begins at the smaller of the two race-courses, the Hippodrome de Sers, just before Christmas, is continued at the Hippodrome du Pont Long in January and February, and ends with the Pau Hunt Cross-Country Meeting, at St. Jammes, in March and April.

While the prize money is less considerable than on the Côte d'Azur, Pau provides experience for riders and mounts which often serves them in good stead at the Auteuil steeplechases. Sers is a very small racecourse, but it has some big obstacles to be negotiated. And the Paris sporting community thinks highly of the Pont Long. Indeed, it is rightly regarded as a great test for men and horses.

It is not so very extraordinary to find a horse which has won a steeplechase or a hurdle race at Pau repeating its success in Paris.

Since 1842, the local races have gone on regularly each season. One of the earliest was run on the Route de Bordeaux and the distance covered was 26 kilometres. The start and finish were at the Hippodrome du Pont Long. The first hurdle race was run in 1852. The first steeplechase followed in 1855. In 1873, the Grand Steeplechase de Pau was inaugurated, but, in 1879, it was superseded by the Grand Prix de Pau.

Basil Tozer makes some remarks on tricks which save men's lives in the classes of racing which prevail at Pau. He is always worth quoting at length :

Surprise is often expressed that in steeplechasing, particularly in a race over an immense course like the Grand National course, where generally falls are plentiful and severe, so few of the riders are seriously injured and hardly ever does a fall prove fatal.

Major Whyte-Melville, in Victorian days the great authority on foxhunting, wrote a treatise

in which he proved that if certain rules which he laid down were followed, no man falling in the hunting-field or between the flags need ever hurt himself seriously. Yet only a few months later his horse fell with him in a ploughed field on the way home from hunting and he was killed.

That might seem to indicate that Whyte-Melville's rules and theories were valueless, but it does not. On the contrary, that he should have been killed in that way to some extent supports his theory that almost always the worst accidents happen at the smallest fences or when a horse stumbles in open country; also that the men who get the worst falls are usually the most finished horsemen.

For a finished horseman parts company with his horse only under what may be called severe provocation, the result being that if his horse falls at a fence without his parting company he will run much more risk of breaking a limb than he would if shot out of the saddle and so clear of the horse.

Hence the reason the worst accidents happen generally at the smallest fences in the hunting-field, and at hole-and-corner steeplechase meetings where the fences are comparatively insignificant; horse and man fall together, and as likely as not the horse on top of the man.

In a race like the Grand National, run at ter-

rific speed and over enormous obstacles, if a horse hits a fence he generally turns a somersault, shooting his rider right out of the saddle, while if he stumbles badly on landing while going at that pace, the best rider in the world is bound to be flung off, more particularly now that cross-country jockeys, too, ride with extremely short stirrups.

Whyte-Melville's theory was that every rider should be *prepared* to fall at every fence he comes to, and that on the instant he realises that his horse has blundered and is going to fall, he should fling his body forward in such a way that he himself will land on his back. Any hunting man will tell you that often it is possible to do that in the hunting-field, but to think of making the attempt when steeple-chasing would be grotesque, for then the whole thing is over in a fraction of a second.

Another reason why professional cross-country riders who are always at the game are seldom hurt is that they must necessarily always be in training, and therefore in the perfect condition summed up in the phrase, « hard as nails. » And as all athletes and pugilists know, a man in perfect training can safely be knocked to an extent that would probably prove fatal if he were not in training.

CHAPTER XI

Town Topics.

Pau, like Nice, is the chief town of a department and consequently has a background composed of permanent residents identified with the political and administrative mechanism of an important area. There are nearly forty thousand people in Pau whose prosperity is greatly increased through the presence of visitors, but who would still live their lives in the town if it were not a winter resort.

The Château of Pau was once the residence of Queen Marguerite of Navarre, who, if she did not write the *Heptameron* within its precincts, at least added ornamental gardens to the park. She was the grandmother of Henri IV., who, born there, was rocked in a curious tortoiseshell cradle which is preserved in his apartments to this day. While the Queen begins

her Prologue to the *Heplameron* with certain references to Cauterets, whose waters she describes as marvellous, she only mentions Pau as the domicile of an apothecary who was tired of his wife.

The Château of Pau today is a transformed — some people might say, a disfigured — stronghold, not quite as imposing as Arundel or Monaco, but a fine addition to the landscape and a decided attraction to the town. In 1791, the Constituent Assembly decreed that it should be preserved as a national monument to Henri IV. This decree has been faithfully carried out. While the initials of his grandparents, Henri and Marguerite of Navarre, appear on the walls of the building, it is the King of France whose physiognomy is met with at every turn, in marble, metal and tapestry; as a child by Bosio; as a man by Franqueville; as a bust by Tremblay; and as a masterpiece of the Gobelins factory. I cannot imagine anyone leaving the *château* without feeling on almost intimate terms with Henri IV., especially after seeing him caught in an

escapade, in one of the small, picture-like tapestries in a little room — known as the Boudoir — somewhere upstairs.

Victor Hugo visited the *château* in 1843. « One only sees three or four apartments, » he wrote, « indifferently restored, but admirably furnished. » As the Duc de Montpensier was expected, Hugo adds, « they have polished the floors for the occasion. » He makes some random remarks, which are not very enlightening.

If one looks up at the *château* from the Rue Marca or the Place de la Monnaie, the big windows appear incongruous. But one forgets the impression of this exterior defect the moment one encounters great shafts of southern sunshine in all the principal apartments.

The greatest drawback in every State-owned show-place is that one sees it under unfavourable conditions. If there are any people about, they are caretakers or tourists. If one carries out a private inspection, the absence of life is almost equally unsatisfactory. Pau unconsciously provided a remedy in allowing the Red

Cross Ball to take place in the *château* once a year. The Prefect of the Basses Pyrénées graced the function with his presence and winter visitors appeared in hosts. For the one night the spacious dining hall of Henri IV.'s birthplace became animated in the extreme. More than a hundred couples, like a shoal of sardines, took possession of the floor, jazzing gently in a seething mass. Casual spectators beheld a kaleidoscopic vision of humanity in comfortable shapes and forms. The scene fulfilled every requirement. The setting was unique. At the bottom of the apartment, Pierre de Franqueville's white marble statue of Henri IV. presided like a ghost. The great Gobelins tapestries, *les Chasses de Maximilien*, with gilt-edged oak beams overhead, added colour to the impression. Even the tall buhl clock in a distant corner seemed a necessary ornament. Cavalry leaders, hunting men and horse dealers elbowed their partners through a human maze. There was a good display of the world, the flesh and the devil. Women of all kinds, conditions and nationalities, grey

heads and gold, and every male type ever seen staggering or swaggering at a charity ball anywhere, packed the hall and overflowed into what is known as the Salle des Officiers, where hunger could be relieved and thirst quenched. The Château of Pau had come to life. It had come to life in a highly respectable manner. There was no reminder of Montmartre or Montparnasse in any of the sights one saw. If the powerful jazz band would have done credit to a cabaret, the dancers themselves, by a process of mass suggestion, were funereal in their dignity. Even the Charleston was performed with decorum.

But all suddenly changed in 1929, and the Red Cross fête became the principal event of the season at the new Municipal Casino.

Before the coming of the new Company, the Pau baccarat room was utterly devoid of colour and animation. But possibly the only colour recognised by a gambler is the colour of his money.

« Avoid gaming », wrote George Washington. « This is a vice productive of every

possible evil. » Talleyrand may have said the same thing, but he continued to gamble.

An old Frenchman with a face like parchment, but with very seeing eyes, once told me he played before dinner every night to gain appetite. There is a street named after his family in Pau, though the name is almost as well-known in Paris.

« Why do you look as if you were enjoying the game? » I asked a male bystander, who obviously was not punting. « I am watching a friend lose, » he laughed. « Is there not always something in the misfortunes of our friends which does not wholly displease us? » he added grimly. I thought his remark was a little too reminiscent of La Rochefoucauld.

A wit has declared that *chemin de fer* is a game in which the punter cries, « Card! », and the dealer cries, « Nine! », whereupon the punter looks daggers and mutters, « Damn! »

Real gamblers, of course, prefer bad language and bad luck to good dinners and good dancing. But the dinners and the dancing await them in the Casino restaurant, called Les Am-

bassadeurs, whenever the joys of gaming begin to wane. As the organization which controls Cannes and Deauville is closely allied with Pau, everything connected with the Casino is in experienced hands. The building itself is spacious and cheerful. Indeed, the great hall and the restaurant make it one of the most attractive casinos in France.

There are hotels for everyone. The Prince of Wales has stayed at the France, and King Alfonso at the Gassion. The Palais, the Grand and Beaumont House are also in the front rank. Then there is the Aragon, which is the newest of all.

The oldest golf links in France are at Pau. They were brought into being early in the reign of Napoleon III. There is a legend that some of Wellington's officers played over the same fields in 1814.

There is something connected with the golf which is not a legend, but a reality of a very beautiful kind. That is the magnificent view from the links. From the Pic de Ger to the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, and beyond in very

fine weather, the eye sweeps along a whole range of the Pyrenees. The Pau golf course has no monopoly in this view, but, sharing in it, the irritations of the game are modified in a manner unknown in America and England. There is nothing more soothing than the combination of the Pyrenean scenery and the sedative air of Pau. The fury of the most indignant golfer will melt into honeyed words in this atmosphere.

If Pau is not a great centre for tennis, it provides a sufficiently interesting tournament in April to meet most demands. For a few days, onlookers can undergo all the chills and thrills of the Côte d'Azur. The Tennis Club, in the Parc Beaumont, a stone's throw from the Casino, is well up to the average. In another part of the district, at the Croix du Prince, is the football ground of the Pau Rugby XV., French Champions in 1928. Then, too, there is a *tir aux pigeons*. Though the pigeons are of clay, the prizes are gold.

The Palois, who is often as much Basque as Béarnais, is very keen on sport. By peeping

over the balustrade at the bottom of the Place Royale, he can be seen in summer playing pelota in his spare moments. It is a curious ball game, which he plays amazingly well, often in spite of torrid heat and a sun that would fry bacon. There are other regional amusements, including Courses Landaises, exciting events in which maddened cows are the chief competitors. It is almost only a sex variation of a bull fight.

It is possible to escape seeing the mad cows, the tennis champions, the pelota adepts, the football fiends, the pigeon shots, and the golf players. But it is quite impossible to avoid seeing something pleasing in Pau. The air in mild weather compels one to fill with sympathy for the place. It is the secret of a notably benevolent feeling which surges to the surface in visitors who intend to depart.

Hunting the fox is the most obvious and best known attraction the place provides. But there are visitors to the town who regard the hunting as only one of many attractions. For example, in season the trout and salmon

fishing in the district is the best in France. I was astounded one spring day to see a man catch an 8-ounce speckled brook trout in the Ousse, just above the railway station, in water which looked as if it had washed all the linen of the department before flowing past the angler. It was a thoroughbred trout of the best family. I was just wondering what it was doing within the town precincts, in the shadow of small factories and warehouses, when the fisherman gave a shout and landed another. Salmon are prevented from getting up to Pau, owing to a series of obstructions. They appear to be very plentiful elsewhere in the Basses Pyrénées, and, at the right moment, the Gave d'Oloron is full of them. Anyone can fish almost anywhere. One local angler is reported to have killed 89 salmon, averaging 22 lbs. each, in one season. Once, when the dams and other obstructions had been damaged, the salmon came up to Pau and even got as far as Nay in hundreds. Fishing is certainly a very important feature of life in Béarn. The fish themselves are as

beautiful as their Scotch relations. But, to be perfectly candid, they are not quite so well behaved. They are just as good to eat and just as energetic by nature. Still their education is lacking. They have only very lately learned that a properly brought up salmon should rise to a fly. Now that they are beginning to understand what is required of them, their zeal to do the correct thing is admirable. In the Gave d'Oloron in April and May, they are keen enough to rise to a mosquito. They will take a Jock Scott or any other fly in the most approved manner.

If the Basses Pyrénées attracts fewer visitors than the Alpes Maritimes, at least the latter department is without the advantage of salmon fishing. There are no salmon in the Mediterranean.

The French, who have a blind passion for English words, label every haunt where people can drink and dance a *dancing*. Why they fail to add hall, hell or palace no one knows. Pau has a « dancing », called Le Loisir, which differs from a London night club in two

respects only. It neither costs a subscription to get in nor a five pound note to get out. It is open to all. Even the Prince of Wales has danced there. The floor is excellent and the band good. There one can see English maidens from Manchester; generals in retirement; town beauties and their admirers; now and then a stray curate; married women without husbands; and occasionnally members of the Hunt. There are also several captains of the land, the sea and the air, with a sprinkling of clod-hoppers, Spanish dancers, and schoolboys. Some of the males are disguised in golf get-up; others try to see through monocles. Ordinarily all these people are out to kill time. On gala nights, when the champagne has flowed, they would kill anything.

A product of which the townspeople are rightly very proud is the wine of Henri IV. It is said that soon after birth the future monarch's lips were moistened with this wine. The average Pau wine merchant calls the beautiful amber fluid Jurançon. But the man who has consumed a bottle calls it the wine

of Henri IV. if he can still speak. It is as rich as white Burgundy — say Montrachet — and as sweet as Château Yquem.

It has probably never been said that the Place Royale at Pau is unrivalled at any of the big resorts. But with the trees in leaf it is a perfect realization of what a *place* in a French country town ought always to be. The statue of Henri IV. is very much more pleasing than most statues. The King looks particularly wide awake and active. He looks, perhaps, as if he had just won at dice and was waiting to be handed the money.

CHAPTER XII

A Poet on the Pyrenees.

There are more than 100 peaks, several 10,000 feet above sea level, visible in fine weather from Pau. The most curious-looking of all is the Pic du Midi — 2,885 mètres — « of melancholy dignity and savage colour », which faces the Place Royale.

Count Henry Russell, a Frenchman of Irish origin, who spent his life mountaineering, climbed it on various occasions. « On the summit, where I found two izards sound asleep », he once wrote, « I heard very distinctly the bells of the sheep grazing on the borders of the Ayous lakes, a thousand metres below me. How touching are such sounds rising from the depths, especially at eventide if one happens to be alone in a dead and frozen region. These sweet symbols of life come up from the earth like a souvenir. »

Russell spent upwards of thirty years in making ascents, and covered the whole Pyrenean range from the Atlantic to the Mediterranean. He was an Alpine enthusiast as well, and had, of course, conquered Mont Blanc. He was equally affected by the sounds coming up to him when he set foot on the top of that most wonderful of all French mountains. « On the summit, on the solitary and glacial crest of Europe, I was influenced by a powerful emotion on hearing the vague murmurs of the Arve, foaming past the habitations of men 4,000 metres below. » He loved solitude, was endowed with a decidedly poetic instinct, but had his moments of worldliness as well.

Of Ariel, a mountain of 2,823 metres, he has a good deal to say, but a few lines are enough for us : « To the east of the peak, there are great yawning abysses — eight or nine hundred metres in depth — in the bottoms of which the little Spanish lakes scintillate. On the other side the diabolical crags west of Balaitous rise with superb majesty.... From the Pyrenean heights Spain always

looks like a Sahara, flecked with steaming pines. »

Balaitous itself, and it is the second highest mountain visible from Pau, gives him an opportunity to express the feelings of an impressionable man with a passion for nature. « I never descend from those places full of terror, where the soul seems nearer heaven than earth, without regret. There man is no longer in his element, amid the scenes of nature in ruins, in those cemeteries of ice and granite, where congelation, more rapid than death, comes at midnight to petrify and subdue into silence the wildest torrents and to hurl boulders into lakes as black as the Styx.... Everything seems to conspire against the well-being of the individual who ventures to sleep on the mountain-tops. But, in spite of it all, he returns to his climbing always with the same pleasure, it may be to escape from suffering or passion. His mind grows more fantastic and as pure and capricious as the red flame which burns at his feet. The senses assume their natural colours, and, uplifted by

poetry and romance, they find a supreme enjoyment in escaping from worldly surroundings. »

A little further on he writes, « The plains of France were so luminous that I easily distinguished with the naked eye Tarbes and Coarraze as well as the village of Agos below Argelès. In Spain, I could see the mountains of Sallent, of Confranc and Panticosa resembling great crocodiles asleep in the sun. Their glaciers blazed like melting gold, and further to the south thousands of humble foothills crowded the vaporous horizon of Aragon. »

Vignemale, the highest mountain in the range facing Pau, was one of his favourites, which he even climbed in winter. After declaring that the colours are warmer in the Pyrenees than they are in the Alps, he contrasts the calm and the sunshine of torrid gorges and valleys with the tumultuous, broken and awful lines of the glaciers. « What contortions are visible in the Vignemale glacier, which seems to descend, terrified by its own height and by the cold,

finally to precipitate itself in the verdure and melt in the heat! »

In his ascent of the Pic de Ger — 2,612 metres — in winter — it was the 5th of March — he was struck by a strange paradox : « It was hot on the summit, as hot as in summer, and the air was so calm that a match would have burnt itself out without protection.... I remarked the same heat and calm in mid-winter at the top of Vignemale. I am convinced that quite often in winter it is warmer on the mountain-tops than in the plains. »

He later adds details of his winter ascent of Vignemale. « At exactly three o'clock we reached the summit of the Grand Vignemale (3,298 metres). I shall never forget the memorable moments we passed up there in the heart of winter, with the certainty that no one else in Europe was just then breathing at our level. From the height of this species of celestial cathedral, we saw at our feet the whole chain of the Pyrenees frozen from end to end. We were in the centre of a paradise of snow. But the sun, making the white covering look

red, was already in rapid flight across the sky, and, though sending the thermometer up to 30 degrees centigrade, we knew it was time to hasten away before the small waterfalls, which descend from the peak, had had time to freeze. At these heights, they freeze almost instantaneously when the sun declines. »

Russell and his companions got back to Gavarnie at 10 p. m. He explains the phenomenon of warmth at high altitudes in winter by the extreme whiteness of the snow which attracts the sun's rays. « In summer, the snow is dirty and reflects few rays, or else it is the ice which makes everything cold, including the ground and the atmosphere, even at a distance. In winter the ice is covered by immense masses of strikingly white snow. »

On one occasion, Russell spent a night on the summit of Vignemale, « between the earth and the moon ». Though it was during the summer, the cold was very great and he had to run up and down the twenty square metres forming the mountain top over and over again. « The moon, shedding a mystic radiance, cover-

ed it with gold. » At 4.30 a. m., the sun began to appear, much to his relief, and at 5 o'clock he felt the first warming rays. « Before long the great Ossouë glacier seemed to catch fire, growing quite suddenly a deeper purple-red for several kilometres : it looked like a river of blood, covered with enormous red waves, and its crevices, which are as big as those of the Alps, resembled gaping scarlet mouths.... In the general awakening of nature, the clouds which had hidden the earth below me began to tremble and then melt away. I saw to the north, 1,500 yards below, a corner of the lake of Gaube, and I heard mounting round me the sounds of a thousand cascades. I imagined that I could hear above them all the inconsolable voice of the Splumouse torrent, which seemed to fill with its harmony, at moments either morbid or savage, the snowy abyss, which falls to the north of the Grand Vignemale. It reminded me vaguely of the despairing music of Chopin. »

Russell can be dipped into at random and always found to yield something. His interest

is far greater as a master of descriptive phrases than as a mere mountaineer, however capable and intrepid. He deserves a better fate than a row of volumes in a local library, but he does not appear to have ever aspired to any greater eminence than a mountain top. He travelled far and wide and knew the Himalayas, the Andes and the Atlas, as well as the mountains of New Zealand. « One would want to return to Béarn if one were already in heaven! » he exclaimed joyfully in his book of *Souvenirs*.

His everlasting enterprise as an explorer of the Pyrenees brought him the curious distinction of having a fine peak named after him; during his lifetime, as it happened. The Pic Russell, invisible from Pau, he first climbed in error. « I had established myself with a friend on the desert shores of the Rio Bueno lakes, which are at an altitude of 2,196 metres and full of trout. One day I climbed a peak in the shape of a pyramid and I called it the Petit Néthou, but it has since been named the Pic Russell. Without being dangerous, it is

far from easy to ascend. It forms the extremity of a rugged and very high ridge — the highest of the Pyrenees — which the Néthou hurls to the south-east and which never descends below 3,200 metres. »

After covering a good stretch, he entered a little valley full of deep pools. In one hour he had reached an extremely elevated *col*, from which he could see « a very high, black, pointed pyramid, patched with snow : it was the Pic Russell. » Three-and-a-half hours after leaving the lakes of Rio Bueno, he had scaled it. He found the summit of the mountain — 3,201 metres — much less pointed than it had seemed from below. He pushed along the ridge which connected it, as he thought, with the Néthou, but was suddenly brought to a standstill by an immense abyss yawning at his feet. This he called the Brèche des Tempêtes.... « The view from the Pic Russell closely resembles that obtained from the Néthou. » Néthou itself — and it is the Mont Blanc of the Pyrenees — is only about 200 metres higher than the Pic Russell.

One of Russell's most extravagant feats was to spend the night on the crest of Néthou. He started out with an English naval man named Hoskins — who in later years became an admiral — and together, accompanied only by one guide, they reached the top at sunset on the same day. « We already felt bizarre sensations, » he wrote, « rather supernatural ones, really, as if we were in another world. Everything appeared strange and menacing : the violet tints of the sky, the sudden cold, the unexpected gusts of wind, and the livid shade of the snow at the approach of night. Perched up in the air, astride the rock, between two abysses, with death on each side, I confess I was not at my ease. A vague terror reigned about us. In the east, towards Perpignan, there were sombre and enormous clouds. Fortunately they were far away, for I could see that they were portents of thunder and lightning. About one o'clock in the morning, the peaks and glaciers were enveloped in an unholy light. It came from the moon, which had emerged from a mass of clouds, more

opaque than night itself, but red in the middle where there was electricity. The moon gave me the impression of someone who had returned from death. All the mountains which slept at our feet, but had been invisible, now looked deformed and ghastly; their contours inspired fear; their snows took on a greenish colour; the great crevasses seemed to move. »

The psychology of fear is interesting. Russell was the bravest and most intrepid of mountaineers, taking his life in his hands a thousand times for love of thrills. But, on his own showing, he once ran from four stagy Spanish bandits like a nervous boy in a panic.

I like this line, « Gusts of wind, long and sad, swept the forests of pines, wringing their branches, until they hissed like serpents. » We can feel the storm brewing. He gives us a taste of fine weather in, « The breeze and the birds seemed to sing in harmony as they passed through the pines, and the air was full of vague and mysterious murmurs which may have come from heaven to console or soften those who could hear. » We catch him again

in a storm. « Thick and tumultuous violet clouds had gathered and now swallowed up the sun, which, in an instant, disappeared like a sinking ship. The Pic des Gours Blanc, in spite of its great height — 3,114 metres — also disappeared entirely in squalls of hail. Blue and black smoke seemed to come from this mountain, as if it were on fire, and one heard the sinister rumbling of the wind. »

He has something to say of the Pyrenean people, too, whom he encountered from time to time. « Near the lake of Epingo — 1,875 metres — we met a colony of Spanish shepherds, whose flocks, far from sure-footed or agile, must have had difficulty in crossing the glaciers. The sheep seemed more tired than the shepherds, who occupied themselves in laughing, singing, and running like goats. »

Russell had a penchant for the tiny Pyrenean lakes, which he mentions very often in his writings. « We arrived at a dear little lake, not merely forgotten, but perhaps unknown, of such a marvellous transparent green that even in the shadow of the blocks of ice

which drifted about the surface it was possible to see the bottom clearly with its thousand details, as if no water whatever intervened. And yet the depth in the middle could have been scarcely less than ten or twelve metres. At certain angles the water was so clear that it was invisible and one might well have fallen into it without seeing the danger. The gigantic blocks of granite scattered about at the bottom of the lake gave the impression of the remains of a town. Those catching the sunlight were of a charming but indefinable green; the others in the shadow of the floating ice were bluish though changing in colour like the cold and fantastic tombs on which the sun, transformed by the stained glass of a cathedral, casts melancholy and mystic lights. »

The little lake of Izabe — they are always little — he says « might be taken for a sapphire. » He is confident that the mountains would lose much of their beauty without the lakes, « the colour and tranquillity of which are in marked contrast with the grey rocks and the wild disorder of the surrounding desolation. »

Views always seemed to hold him during lonely ascents. When he has told us that Perdighero « forms a superb blue precipice », he pauses to contemplate the profile of the Monts Maudits and the blue peaks of the Ariège, « a sea of tumultuous granite. » He was standing in the centre of the most icy region in the Pyrenees. « At the best season a sort of terror reigns, even in the air. One hears nothing and the vultures perched on the mournful and accursed rocks seem without subsistence. A death-like immobility prevails everywhere. »

On another occasion, he stopped at the bridge of Rimoula, at nine o'clock in the evening, « to contemplate the cone of the Pic du Midi de Bigorre, rising like a silver idol, under a pale moon. At night mountains seem to become weird beings, animated and mystic, which reflect and see in the nocturnal lights things that are invisible to us. » The Pic du Midi de Bigorre is very prominent in the range facing Pau, but it is not a *vis-à-vis* of the Place Royale like the other Pic du Midi,

which, though stranger-looking, is only slightly higher.

The mountains near Luchon « are fascinating in a supreme degree, » in Russell's opinion. « The Western Pyrenees, » he asserts, « cannot be compared with these silent and funereal-looking giants of granite and ice, which appear to touch the cold and beautiful regions of the sky where peace is eternal. »

« What painter, » he asks in another place, « could ever put on canvas, translated in their true colours, the dying lights, the infinite sadness and the glory with which nature covers herself at the end of a fine day? Surrounded by vertiginous peaks man finds himself in the midst of such immensity that he feels he has risen from the earth to dominate a hemisphere. »

CHAPTER XIII

Pau in the Reign of Louis Philippe¹.

By Alexander Taylor².

Pau ranks tolerably high as to the state of its streets, the commodiousness of its houses, and the convenience of its *voitures*, which are almost indispensable to the stranger. Twenty years ago³ there was not a house with a carpet, not a carriage to be hired, nor, with one exception, a private carriage in the town; the houses were deficient in all that which we mean by the word comfort; and until very lately there was not a *trottoir* in any of the streets. Now, the houses are, to a certain extent, furnished

1. This title is new. The text has been revised and re-arranged.

2. An English physician after whom a street in Pau is named.

3. About 1822.

according to English wants and views of convenience; carriages are to be had in abundance at a moderate charge; and every year improvements are taking place to render Pau more agreeable as a residence. Each street can boast of broken lines of foot pavement, and in a very short time the example will be generally adopted.

Pau frequently, one might say almost generally, enjoys a stillness of atmosphere so complete as to leave a doubt as to how the wind really blows. So much is this the case that it is said of a certain naval captain, who had buffeted many a breeze, that he left Pau in disgust, because, during the two or three years he had lived there, he had never once encountered a capful of wind.

With regard to public amusements Pau is confessedly deficient. Although there is a theatre, it is not at all in character with the importance of the town; but a racecourse is being prepared on the neighbouring plain of Billère, where, for the first time, annual races will take place during the month of

August, under the auspices of the government.

But to those who prefer rational gaiety and amusement the private *soirées* during the winter months fill up the public void, and leave little else to be desired. Here one meets with agreeable and accomplished people, and the time never hangs heavily for those who have sufficiently good health to visit in the evening, or whose tastes lead them in that direction. There are in Pau varieties of society to please the grave and the gay, and all are agreeable in their way.

Some years ago an English club was established, where the London journals and leading periodicals were taken, which formed an agreeable centre of attraction and bond of union among our countrymen. It numbered in 1838-39, fifty-five members; but it has since been allowed to fall to the ground. It is proposed, however, to revive it during the ensuing winter, and to infuse into it some principle of permanency.

A custom has prevailed in Pau until it has

become law that the last comer calls upon those who have arrived before him, if he wishes to make himself acquainted with the society. It is so opposite to the rule in England that the information is not always very palatable to the retiring sensitiveness of the English character; but on reflection the custom will be found to have had some good reasons for its original adoption, and for its present continuance. In the first place, it gives the stranger an absolute advantage over the older resident; he may, from sickness in his family, wish to remain isolated; or he may desire to make the acquaintance of those of congenial tastes; or to modify his circle according to his views. If, again, he desires to enter more generally into society, the path is sufficiently smoothed to make it easy. The custom gives the stranger a breathing-time, in which he can look round and choose the people and plan most suitable to the arrangements to which he intends to adhere.

The facilities for taking air and exercise at Pau, either in a carriage, on horseback, or on

foot, are abundant. Five principal highways, kept in excellent repair, radiate from Pau, and command views, not only of the Pyrenees, but also of the tamer but still beautiful scenery of the plains. On horseback, rides may be varied to any extent, among the undulating and well-wooded *côteaux* to the south; while the pedestrian, if in good health, may make many pilgrimages through green lanes and clustering vineyards; and although much cannot be said of a field for the sportsman's pursuits, still there is sufficient to act as an incentive for him to take air and exercise. At the early part of the season, after the corn has been housed, at some five or six miles round Pau, the quail and partridge, particularly the former, may be found in sufficient quantity to afford sport; and during the winter months, woodcock, snipe, and wild duck, at no great distance from the town. There is another sport of a more exhilarating and manly kind; that of hunting the izard and the bear in their native fastnesses in the mountains, and searching for the *coq de bruyère* — the capercailzie

of Scotland — amid the black pines on the summits of lofty peaks. In the valley of Tarbes, twenty-four miles to the east of Pau, a baronet¹ keeps a pack of English hounds, which meet four times a week during the season. The foxes are so abundant that the sportsmen are never without a find; and the runs are described as excellent, the country being well suited for the sport. The worthy baronet, who is himself passionately fond of the chase, is very polite to his countrymen, who, like himself, possess a genuine love for it.

The view from the park of Pau combines, in one harmonious whole, all the elements which constitute a perfect *coup d'œil* of beauty and grandeur. The highest walk, extending for nearly a mile, commands a most beautiful and ever-changing view of the mountains, which lie pile above pile stretched along the whole extent of the southern sky. Indeed they form a scene of enchantment, and are never for a

1. Sir Henry Oxenden. His pack was later transferred to Pau. Dr. Taylor was writing in 1842.

moment the same, sometimes so involved in mist that they form but a faint blue background to the nearest hills, sometimes so distinct that one might fancy seeing the izard bounding from rock to rock. The course of the sun, also, alters them entirely by the difference of the shadows; and the clouds frequently rolled in white masses, half way down their peaks, give them an appearance of much greater height than when they stand out in the plain blue sky. But, however they may appear, even at the times they are clearest, there is still that kind of airy uncertainty about them which makes one scarcely think them real. They are like the bright illusion of a fairy dream; and, indeed, I was almost inclined to think it a deception, when on waking, the third morning after my arrival, I looked for the mountains, and found that, like Aladdin's palace, they were gone, not a vestige of them remaining, not a trace where they had been. The sky, indeed, was cloudy, but the day otherwise fair, and to anyone unaccustomed to mountain scenery, it would appear impossible that any

clouds could hide objects at other times seen so near. But so it was; for two days we saw nothing of them; and then again the curtain of clouds rose majestically from before them, and left the whole as clear and as grand as ever.

The chief object of interest in Pau, after its scenery, is the *château*, a fine old building mingling the military features of the thirteenth century with the architecture of later periods. It is viewed with great veneration by the Béarnais as the birth-place of their beloved Henri IV. The chamber in which he first saw the light is still preserved, although very lately modernized; and a large tortoise-shell, his cradle, is exhibited under a satin and gold canopy, with armorial supporters. His present Majesty, Louis Philippe, has expended large sums on the restoration of this, the first abode of the common ancestor of the Bourbons. Furniture of the epoch of Henri IV., or as near to it as possible, has been selected by antiquarians. The following anecdote, while it shows the attachment which the Béarnais entertain for the memory of Henry IV., displays

considerable tact in the manner of getting out of a difficulty. Desiring to erect a statue to Henri, they requested permission of the Ministers of Louis XIV. to carry their wishes into execution. They received the answer that, as they had money to spend for such purposes, it would be more becoming to devote it in honour of the reigning sovereign. Feeling it impossible to resist so strong a hint, they raised the required statue, but placed on it the following inscription, which carries a little quiet satire with it :

A Louis XIV., petit-fils du bon Henri.

This statue shared the fate of all other works of the same nature, in honour of the Bourbons, falling before the blind fury of the first revolutionists.

All reminiscences of Henri IV. are treasured by the natives with great pride and devotion, and, from their historic character, are not without interest to strangers. A mile from Pau, the house where Henri was nursed still exists in the village of Billère. Many legends

are cherished of his feats in love before those in war supplied so important a page to the history of Europe.

From the birth-place of Henri IV., a three minutes' walk brings one to the house where the present King of Sweden was born. It is a small two-storied house, but an interest belongs to it attaching to few palaces.

The state of prosperity and national and individual happiness to which the King of Sweden has raised his people, show how fortunate they were in the choice of their monarch. A well-known traveller informed me that he had made a point of ascertaining the sentiment of all classes in Sweden towards the King. In the remotest hamlet, as in the palace of the noble, the feeling is one not merely of pure loyalty, but of the warmest affection. His Majesty still takes a lively interest in everything connected with the welfare of Béarn and the Béarnais.

There are different objects of antiquarian interest within the compass of a morning's ride from Pau. I may instance the Church of

Sainte Foi, at Morlaas, the Church of Lescar, with its monuments to kings and renowned characters of history; the Maison Carrée, at Nay, in the direction of the Pyrenees; and a little further on, the Château of Coarraze, where Henri IV. spent his boyhood, educated like the hardiest peasant.

The ride to La Pietad over the *côteaux* of Gelos is one full of striking scenery. Indeed, mounted on the quiet, sure-footed ponies of the country, the rides may safely be varied in all directions, either in search of healthy exercise or picturesque situations. Each hundred yards of progress reveal fresh combinations of smiling beauty and majestic grandeur. Through every opening, from every height, the mountains, shadowy or pronounced, are visible, except when the clouds drop low, and then the rich and lovely *côteaux* have it all to themselves, and make another kind of country of it; peaks and eagles vanish, and vines, ploughshares, woods, and woodlarks, the thrush, the linnet, and the hawthorn bush come into their own. I have never seen a country more

beautifully ridged; one wooded line runs parallel with another, not stiffly, but in soft and graceful undulations; a third and higher one stretches off beyond; valley after valley lies behind them, full of silence, shade, and freshness; and as there are literally no bad bits here, every country house has at least a fine position, usually of a pleasant country character, and often woods and lawns that we love to liken to our own of England.

The people of Pau, and its vicinity, are more phlegmatic and slow in their expressions and modes of action that we find generally among the French. They have not so much liveliness, and their gestures are more quiet and staid. The circulation of their blood is evidently carried on more slowly and equably, and the brain is consequently less impetuously acted upon by arterial stimulus. In times of political excitement and agitation, they act with moderation, and, having each some small stake in the stability of the country, are easily governed.

But this equanimity and functional quietude

are not altogether confined to the native population. They gradually steal, by a slow acclimatizing process, on the stranger. Every Englishman who has remained some time in Pau, whether ill or well, must confess to a certain degree of self-satisfied dreaminess, to a considerable desire for present ease and for procrastinating to the future, to a much greater extent than, upon looking back upon the past, he would, at one time, have considered possible in his own case. Indeed so comparative an absence of organic irritation is there, usually, among the healthy, that it resembles the effect of a sedative. The pulse beats with a slow, soft, equable stroke, and the arterial excitement appears just sufficient to keep up functional action to the point that does not wear out the machinery.

Henri IV., who, during his youth, had much frequented the Pyrenees, and who had witnessed the abuses which prevailed, attempted, on his mounting the throne of France, to check them, and issued, in 1603, certain edicts creating superintendents and intendants general,

who were charged with the minute surveillance of the waters, baths, and mineral fountains of the kingdom. These edicts were confirmed by subsequent monarchs; and at the present day, at each watering-place, there is a medical inspector appointed by the government, to one of the departments of which he is bound to make annual reports as to the state of the district under his charge.

There is an amusing legend concerning the virtues of the Capbern waters. It is said that at one time there lived at Capbern a certain maid of the mill, who, although forty years of age, enjoyed a reputation far and wide for her beauty and freshness of complexion. Her rivals, eclipsed as they found their new-blown charms to be, sought anxiously to discover how it was that time thus passed over her in vain; for no wrinkle disturbed the serenity of her brow; her hair retained its raven gloss, her eyes their killing fire, her gait its elasticity, and her figure its delicacy and grace. Her companions, however, on the watch, discovered her secret. At very early dawn, or

in the deep gloaming, our heroine had been accustomed to steal unperceived to the solitary source, and there renew her charms by drinking of its magic waters and bathing in their rejuvenating stream. But what secret will not woman, impelled by rivalry, penetrate? The maid was surprised, and, as may be expected, great was the afflux of candidates to the spring, and widespread the influence of its powers.

In the region of Capbern, there are the remains of the Abbey of Escaladieu. Petronille, Comtesse de Bigorre, famous, among other things, for having *used up* five husbands, to adopt the quaint phraseology of a biographer, wishing to retire from the world, towards the close of her life, chose the Escaladieu as her place of retreat. She died in 1251, after having made a curious will, where, in giving details of her debts, she makes mention, among other creditors, of a certain Vastel Gascon, of Tarbes, to whom she declared herself indebted in the sum of eighteen sous, for a pair of shoes which she had bought of him, and had sent as a present to the Queen of England.

At Pau, a good opportunity is afforded every Monday, the weekly market-day, of observing the physique of the Béarnais population. Every road pours upon the town its tributary streams of peasantry to swell a throng, which renders the principal streets almost impassable. Apart from the picturesque effect produced by the lively and well-assorted colouring of their costumes, one cannot but be struck with the decidedly marked appearances of health in both sexes.

We do not see among this crowd the emaciation produced either by griping poverty, constitutional debility, or enervating vices, but a well-balanced tranquillity of manner, and a physical development, not exaggerated, but compact, which, little interfered with by art, conveys to the mind the impression of what a peasantry ought to be, neither above nor below its position, with health that knows no violent alternations, and a contentment springing from the *mens sana in corpore sano*.

The effect of the genial south wind, which, for an average of years, blows during the two

first winter months, is very sensibly visible on the vegetation at Pau. On the Place Royale, there is a sycamore tree, which, in the winter of 1840-41, displayed leaves an inch long on the 6th of January. During the present winter of 1841-42, occasionally and unusually severe as the weather had been at its commencement, I counted at least a dozen leaves on this tree on the 12th of January and noticed that the remaining branches were bursting with buds.

CHAPTER XIV

Gaston Phœbus.

I

Lord of Béarn.

Between five and six hundred years ago Orthez was the principal residence of the redoubtable Gaston Phœbus, whose name to this day is second only to that of Henri IV. in the hearts of the Béarnais. The handsome, marble youth with a rather womanly face, caressing a hound on a pedestal in the gardens of the Château of Pau, is Triqueti's idea of this somewhat remarkable character.

Gaston Phœbus was the son of Gaston IX. of Béarn and Eleanore de Comminge. There is a piquante little story told of Eleanore, whose virtue, by the way, appears always to have been exceptional. It relates to her age at the time

of her marriage. Just how old she was is doubtful, but she was appreciably the senior of her husband, who was only fifteen. One day some tactless person gibed her on the subject.

« But your husband, the Comte de Foix, is a child ! » exclaimed the ill-mannered courtier.
« Whereas you, Madame... »

Eleanore interrupted the remark with her eyes. Her glance was full of pity.

« I, » she declared, « am older than my husband. Yes ! It matters not. If he were yet unborn and I knew of a surety that the day must come, however far distant, when he would marry me, I would patiently await his birth and coming to manhood. »

From the earliest days of his youth Gaston Phœbus, the son of this excellent woman, prayed for gentleness of mind and firmness of character. He confided to the Duke of Burgundy that he was perverse and frivolous and that his parents were ashamed of him. His countrymen endorsed this confession by saying that he was worthless and unfit to rule. Eleanore quietly set herself to bring him to

reason. His father also endeavoured to mould him in righteousness.

With all his moral defects, Gaston was considered good looking, which was a great compensation to him during the period of his transition from evil to good. In the end, he frankly expressed himself as satisfied with his own improvement. Indeed, the moment soon arrived when he believed that no member of his entourage could boast of better qualities. As for his appearance, he had become so irresistible that Phœbus was attached to him as a surname. There are writers who dispute this connection and believe that he was called Phœbus on other grounds.

When he was twelve years old his father went to Spain to aid Alfonso the Avenger. The boy then fell still more under the influence of his mother.

The King of Castile had beaten the Moors at Rio Salado and aimed at taking Algeciras; but his funds were low : soldiers refused to fight on credit. Gaston's father owed him nothing, not even allegiance. The campaign

soon went badly for the allies and before two months had passed Eleanore had become a widow. She assumed the regency of Béarn forthwith and never remarried.

Gaston Phœbus quickly showed so much aptitude for learning that his people cried out in sorrow. They felt that his erudition stood in the way of military prowess. It is pleasing to believe that he began his career as a soldier by fighting the Moors. As there happened to be a long armistice after the Christians had taken Algeciras, it seems probable that he tasted battle for the first time against some other foe. He had become a French general, at any rate, during his absence from home.

At eighteen he married Agnes, daughter of Jeanne de France and Philip the Noble of Navarre. The year of the marriage was 1349. Unfortunately, Agnes was the sister of Charles the Bad, who proved to be very troublesome to the young couple. His turbulence and perfidy were notorious. When Gaston once tried to get him out of a scrape, he was himself locked up in the Châtelet. After his liberation,

he returned to Béarn and settled his affairs. To avoid being disgraced again by his brother-in-law, he next hurried to Poland, where he joined the knights engaged in converting the pagans on the banks of the Vistula. His companions were German knights who loved horses. The religious order to which they belonged had in the end to cut them down to 10 mounts each and 100 to a commander. Gaston found life so expensive with these men that he had to borrow heavily. But he gained experience, especially in hunting the big game of Northern Europe.

On arriving back in France, he found himself in a cauldron of popular risings, petty wars, and other strife. When at length he had reached the point of beating his own neighbour, the Comte d'Armagnac, the Princess of Wales, wife of the Black Prince, implored him to be indulgent. Her husband failed to see the matter with quite the same eyes, for he thought that Armagnac had deserved his punishment. However, Gaston showed the forbearance craved by the lady — it was about the reduct-

ion of a ransom — and added to his reputation as a large-minded and generous man.

His Court at Orthez in time became the centre of a brilliant coterie of soldiers and writers. Froissart, of course, proved to be his most talented literary favourite. The chronicler arrived at Morlaas one day in November, 1388. After spending the night there, he rode on to Orthez and put up at the Hôtel de la Lune. Gaston immediately sent for him and entertained him at the *château* for 12 weeks, « paying all expenses ». He also was extremely hospitable to any English or French knights on their way to join the Prince of Wales or Duguesclin in Castile.

Gaston seems to have encouraged and received with open arms those driven from their possessions by political or military misfortunes. Under him Béarn became a refuge for exiles. He maintained neutrality himself whenever it was possible.

During the struggle for Guyenne between the Prince of Wales and the native nobility, he managed to keep out of the conflict.

With all his endowments — courage, kindness and sagacity — he was a violent man at heart.

After twenty-five years of married life, his wife, who had gone to Navarre to recover some money which Charles the Bad had annexed, was too terrified to return to Orthez empty handed. The separation was quite final. Again, the mysterious death of his young son, whom Froissart apologetically declares had in all innocence nearly poisoned him, was another and darker incident. And there were many more. But he had a religious tendency, too, which occasionally showed itself.

Gaston's last military achievement was to fight for the Count of Flanders at Rosebecq. Some years afterwards, on May 1, 1387, he began his literary labours on hunting.

For years he had made the chase and the cultivation of literature his principal recreations. The century in which he lived produced Dante and Petrarch, as well as Froissart. And with the last of these immortals he became closely acquainted. Froissart says of their first meeting, " The Comte de Foix welcomed

me, laughing and telling me in good French that he knew me very well and had often talked about me. ”

It was at Orthez that Froissart collected the material for two of his volumes. His influence on the writings of Gaston may well have been considerable, for the hunting book was in preparation at the time of his visit and he himself used to read a romance to the prince each night, after supper.

Orthez was perhaps the most animated small capital in Europe. Gaston had a keen eye for colour and the magnificence with which he surrounded himself showed that he appreciated the effect on the senses of sumptuous trappings and display.

Intellectually he was the equal of any of the leaders of his time. Machiavelli, who was not born until the century which followed his, could have taught him little in statecraft. The varied aspects of life which had become familiar to him in his wanderings over Europe; his intrepid spirit always tuned up for encounters with man or beast; his great physical

strength; and his knowledge of books, as well as people, developed in him a rare personality, enabling him to outshine very easily the rulers of greater states.

The presence of his kinswoman Jeanne, daughter of the Comte de Boulogne, at Orthez, in 1389, added to the brilliance of his Court. It was said that her beauty was as great as her dowry, which included the county of Auvergne, the barony of Lunel and immense estates in Languedoc. As her guardian, Gaston was approached by the most eligible suitors of the period. But he was elusive in his dealings with them until the Duc de Berry, uncle of the King, presented himself. Berry was a widower and old.

Gaston at first pretended to demur though the prospect of an alliance with the Royal House delighted him.

When Jeanne left for Auvergne to be married, he saw that she was accompanied by more than 500 of his most illustrious knights. This cavalcade must have greatly enhanced and extended his prestige.

In the last days of the same year Gaston went to Toulouse with the flower of his followers to meet Charles VI. It enabled him again to gratify to the full his taste for pageantry.

In contrast to the pomp and colour of the Court of Béarn were the quaint customs of the common people. A curious ceremony still in vogue in Gaston's epoch took place each year at Arna, high up in the mountains. Arna marked the frontier separating Spain from Béarn.

Seven jurats from seven Spanish villages and seven from Béarn assembled at this spot, each group remaining on its own territory. In the presence of a notary, the Spaniards proposed the renewal — the confirmation — of peaceful relations. The Béarnais replied by placing their pikes on the line of demarcation, across which their neighbours then placed theirs. Afterwards the fourteen jurats touched the cross formed by the pikes, the notary administered the oath and all swore that peace should be observed. Following these formalities thirty Béarnais arrived from the woods

driving three cows. The cows were made to stand half in Spain and half in Béarn. The Spaniards gravely examined and accepted them, offering a meal of bread, ham and wine to the donors.

No one knows whether the cows were given as tribute or as an instalment of compensation for some past crime. Whatever the motive was, the proceedings took place at Arna regularly every year in the time of Gaston Phœbus, as they had done for generations.

Probably the most striking *fêtes* with which he himself was ever identified were those in honour of Charles VI. at Mazères, in Foix. They followed the meeting at Toulouse, where he had presented members of the King's entourage with sixty — some authorities say 600 — war-horses, palfreys and mules, all with harness and saddles. He had also distributed gold in handfuls to the royal attendants. But the King's arrival within Gaston's own dominions — it was in January, 1390 — provided the Lord of Béarn with an excuse to excel his previous demonstration of goodwill.

At the frontier, the King was met by the noblest of Gaston's followers, who, disguised as shepherds and herdsmen, brought as an offering sheep and cattle, as well as stallions from the Count's stud. Many of the animals wore collars with silver bells.

Charles was greatly impressed.

« If, » he declared in an outburst of enthusiasm, « the Comte de Foix is a great captain, he is also the most courteous and generous prince of our reign ! »

All of which delighted the ear of the *châtelain* of Orthez and Mazères. There was, by the way, no *châtelaine*, for the countess had never returned from Spain and even Gaston's favourite mistress had died some years before. He had become entirely engrossed in literary pursuits, hunting and entertaining.

Those were his three chief interests in life when, one day in May, 1391, he returned from a bear hunt, complained of the hot weather, and, after placing his hands in a silver basin of very cold water, was taken suddenly ill and died.

CHAPTER XV

Gaston Phœbus.

II

His Manuscript on Hunting.

Gaston Phœbus had the will and the literary experience necessary to set down in some detail facts relating to a variety of animals, whose habits he had studied carefully. As a great hunter, he justifies his favourite pastime by prefacing his treatise with the advantages which spring from sport. He expresses the belief that the chase should bring every man fitness of mind and body with long life.

In a rather outspoken way — some people might consider him a little flamboyant — he tells the reader frankly that he knows more about women and wild animals than anyone else. From what he says, one might suppose

that he had always vanquished both. He also argues very fully how the hunter can better resist ills of the imagination than the man who stays at home. Then he suddenly acknowledges that going to bed is an excellent habit.

His Old French is difficult to follow, but, with diligence, the manuscript can be made to yield some astounding information. Where he would offend even the least sensitive of modern hunting men is in his declaration that, after the kill, the fox should be prepared, cooked and given to the hounds to eat with a little bread. On the other hand, earth-stopping is brought into the story with all the precision of a Willoughby de Broke. If it were not for the cooking of the fox one might be inclined to acclaim him more loudly.

He obviously feels entitled to every praise. He seems to have his eye on the gallery most of the time. That is to say, when he lets himself go. Although he dedicates the manuscript to the Duke of Burgundy, it is perfectly evident that he wants his brave words about love to reach some of the beauties of

Philip's Court. He more than hints that he is himself the greatest lover of the time. Possibly he hopes that he will be sent for by some languishing little lady to prove his words to be true and not merely the idle boasting of an unsophisticated *seigneur* writing fiction in the far South.

As a matter of history, he took to writing to distract his mind from a host of bitter memories. While, in the book, he pretended to consider himself so successful with women, he had managed to make his connection with them a source of chagrin and tragedy in real life. It may or it may not have been a relief to him to keep his wife at a distance, but her absence led to the death of his only legitimate son.

The latter, whose name was also Gaston, had returned from the Court of Navarre, where he had been to visit his mother. During the visit, Charles the Bad had presented him with a packet of poison, saying that it would, when administered, change the Lord of Béarn as if by enchantment. The unfortunate youth con-

fided the secret to a natural brother, who promptly blurted it out.

Gaston Phœbus was quite furious. He had his heir thrown into prison and fifteen young acquaintances put to death. Some say that the son perished at the hands of the executioner; Froissart asserts that he was accidentally killed with a nail-file by his father. Whichever way it was, the moment young Gaston was dead, Gaston Phœbus was distraught with anguish. Then, before he had had time to recover himself, he heard that his mistress, named Marguerite — she was probably the mother of the natural son who warned him about the poison — died under mysterious circumstances. Thus he was very grievously hit.

It is easy to believe that his hunting adventures were more gratifying to him than anything else. He had foxes, wolves, boars and bears within easy reach of Orthez. In his exploits in Northern Europe, he saw, if he did not actually kill, the reindeer. He had a retentive memory, which enabled him to draw

upon a mine of information when the moment arrived for him to drug or drown his sorrows in the preparation of the manuscript. He may have used Froissart as a literary adviser. He could hardly have failed to do so, with such a gifted person under his own roof.

It seems probable that the hunting book was inspired by Gace de la Vigne, who had presented a manuscript on the dangers of unoccupied leisure — the need for sport — to the Duke of Burgundy about 1382. This was the same Duke of Burgundy as Gaston chose to send his manuscript to. The Duke was incidentally the son-in-law and heir of the Count of Flanders for whom Gaston had fought.

It is a little difficult to say with any certainty what happened to the copy of the manuscript which Gaston sent to the Duke of Burgundy. Argote de Molina wrote that it had passed by inheritance to Philip II. of Spain and found a resting-place in the San Laurenço Library of the Escorial Palace. There is a theory that it perished there in a fire in 1671. Against this is the statement that the MS. remained in the

palace until 1809, when it vanished : in thin air or in someone's pocket as one chooses to believe.

Other copies, not, however, made in the lifetime of the author, exist at the Bibliothèque Nationale, in Paris. The most interesting of these is enriched with some miniatures of exquisite workmanship. This manuscript bears the arms of Saint Vallier and it is argued by competent authorities that it was either copied for Aymar de Poitiers, Seigneur de Saint Vallier, or for his son, Jean de Poitiers, who was so devoted to the chase that he named his daughter Diane. In 1523, Jean was implicated in a conspiracy and arrested at Lyons. He was quickly sentenced to death and his property confiscated. He was actually kneeling on the scaffold, watched by gloating eyes, when the glad tidings arrived that he had been reprieved. The delightful Diane de Poitiers, his daughter, who had become the King's favourite, and was immensely powerful, had intervened in time.

As Jean de Poitiers had had all his possessions seized, his copy of the Gaston Phœbus

manuscript became the property of François Premier, whose passion for hunting and letters was only equalled by his passion for Diane. In 1525, François lost his luggage in the Italian campaign and the manuscript fell into the hands of a soldier, who sold it to the Bishop of Trent. The latter presented it to the brother of the Emperor Charles V. After remaining in the keeping of the Austrians for upwards of 130 years, it was recovered by the Marquis de Vigneau and given to Louis XIV., in 1661. Still, it had not yet completed its chequered career, for Louis deposited it at the Bibliothèque Nationale, then got it back again and finally left it to his son, the Comte de Toulouse. From the Comte de Toulouse it passed to the House of Orleans. It was among the possessions of King Louis Philippe when the Château of Neuilly was burnt by the mob in 1848. Fortunately, it was rescued, though slightly bloodstained, and placed in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

The next most valuable of the copies is older than that of Saint Vallier. It is decorated with

the quartered arms of Foix and Béarn and is thought to have been the property of Jean Premier, who became Lord of Béarn in 1413.

The work of Gaston Phoebus has also been in print for hundreds of years. The first edition, a crude one, was brought out towards the end of the fifteenth century.

Poor Gaston's solemn and well-meant advice about cooking foxes is unlikely to win sympathy, but his love of hounds and lifelong devotion to the chase may soften outraged feelings. He kept more hounds than anyone before or since his time.

The passage in which he declares foxhunting to be best in January, February and March can raise no controversy. He selects these months, because, as he says, the trees are bare and the hunter can see what he is about. And what Reynard and the hounds are about as well.

Foxes of the fourteenth century were exactly like their descendants. Gaston alludes to their wiles, their malice and their little habit of invading farmyards. He indicates, with singularly precise directions, how they can be taken alive

or dead. But he can tell the reader almost as much about rabbits or bears.

Gaston's book is curious if it is not exciting. He no doubt little dreamed that, centuries after he had won undying fame as a hunter, Pau, to whose castle he had added a dungeon, was destined to be the premier hunting centre of France.

THE END.





